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A Puff of Cigar Smoke

In a few weeks' time the Department of the Environment will favour us with its 'consultative document' on the future of the railway system. Yet while this exercise in open government hangs fire ministers are already pursuing policies which will annihilate whole areas of railway service and put decent transport even further out of the reach of the poor. The sum of £9,000 has been spent on an unpublished report by Professor Peter Hall, whose chief recommendation to the Department was that rail track be concreted over and used as road. Let nobody think that the report was insensitive to the burning issues; it states that 'the frequent call by environmentalists to transfer freight from road tc railway can be achieved if the railway is turned into a road'. This kind of revelation about departmental thinking surely justifies the concern expressed by rail unions and a wide spread of MPs. Yet the response of Anthony Crosland has been consistently dismissive and discourteous. Ever since his notorious 'codswallop' speech, in which he waved away protests about the reduction in British Rail investment, the Secretary of State has adopted a stonewall policy to any manifestation of discontent. The standard letter of reply from his department when commuters write in is now the extract from *Hansard* in which the 'codswallop' reply was first made. Mr Crosland may congratulate himself on adopting a proletarian argot, but an MP of his own party came closer to the point when he said 'we are asking for open government . . . not for secret surveys and snide comments, not for dismissals of fears and protests in a puff of cigar smoke'.

It was not until 4 February that Mr Crosland publicly confirmed that British Rail have been told to freeze investment at £238m. for the coming years. He has not yet gone any further than insulting various leaders of the railway unions for their unanimous conclusion that this will reduce track mileage from 11,000 to 4,000, perhaps as early as 1981. In the meantime, steep and continuous rises in fares (which had increased by 68 per cent since March 1974 even before last week's new twist of the spiral) are driving custom away and making civil service prophecies self-fulfilling.

Consoling himself with the wreckage of the 'integrated transport' philosophy which informed Labour thinking all through the Sixties, Mr Crosland has recently written for the Fabian Society that commuter fares are a subsidy for the middle classes and should be increased to an economic level. Yet the inevitable counterpart of his policy, namely increased motorway traffic, will infallibly inflate the already enormous concealed subsidy which we pay for motorists. More than £3,300m. is soaked up every year in tax relief on company cars, accidents, and the various forms of maintenance which the road system requires. Other countries confronting this problem – notably West Germany and the United States – have found it prudent either to increase the rail subsidy or, in the American case, actually to reopen bankrupt railroads. Yet a British Labour Government is apparently content to abandon railways to the law of diminishing returns. All the evidence, particularly that from the increased use of Inter-City trains, points in the opposite direction. And the number of passenger miles has been increasing steadily over the past four years. But inevitably, with the cost of travel becoming prohibitive, the planners can point to apparent 'trends' which are in fact the result of their own handiwork.

Meanwhile, after years of slow and patient effort, the railway unions have won the right to examine the books and plans of British Rail. Yet their first exercise of this newly won industrial democracy, which was to reveal the stripping of rail services from Scotland, Wales and Cornwall, has been treated with contempt. And the combination of investment freeze, fare increases and route cancellation goes on apace before the White (or Green) Paper has even seen the light of day. Mr Crosland's strategy is not only a threat to the future of our railways, based on a false theory of which class should suffer the burdens. It is also a rebuff for democratic participation in planning, and a style of government which is becoming altogether too familiar.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

What About the Dockers?

A double anniversary – the fall of the Heath Government in February 1974 and the rise of Mrs Margaret Thatcher in the following year. What is the appropriate reaction? Should one cheer or weep? I propose that we should smile weakly, and with strong reservations. At least Mrs Thatcher was deprived of a parliamentary victory on Tuesday night. On the other hand, there is no doubt that some shrewd demagogy in recent weeks has established her still more firmly in the public eye: the Iron Lady, standing before you in her red chiffon gown with her softly waved hair, or emerging from a self-propelled gun at the Rhine Army base in Gütersloh, or, more fantastically, waving a dead fish above her head (she held the thing with a couple of paper towels, so as not to soil the fingers). She is certainly, vividly and triumphantly, *there*, although whether the electorate will respond favourably remains to be seen.

To Mr Edward Heath, she is a disaster, destroying everything he stood for and everyone (although there were precious few) who stood by him. For him, there seem to be no regrets about the past, until the time of Thatcher. Mr Heath does not seem to conceive that he might have made any major errors of judgment. The only great Tory mistake was the ditching of Mr Heath. He will not budge. He will certainly not budge from the position he occupies at present, on the front bench below the gangway, among the Tory odd-balls. Watching him on Tuesday night, as he sat there with his arms and legs tightly crossed, a solitary and conspicuous figure, I could not help reflecting on the bitterness of his position. For Mr Heath's loyalty to himself implies a great disloyalty to his former colleagues. Where they change their minds or their allegiances, they condemn themselves, in his eyes, out of hand. They become as though they had never been – figures entirely lacking in political merit.

As Mr Heath sat there, only his eyes moved to take in the colourful scene around him – there was something reptilian in his stillness, which contrasted sharply with the bustle of the chamber. The members passed through the lobbies, hobbling, striding, shambling, sloping, in small groups, in droves. Those who were too ill to move sat in Rolls-Royces in the car-park and were nodded through. There was excitement among the Tories, who had brought the debate to a raucous conclusion, barracking Mr Albert Booth throughout his undistinguished speech. Mr Booth sat down 15 seconds too soon, and Mr Patrick Cormack, who looks like the Rotter of the Remove, was on his feet denouncing the Bill. With his owl eyes and his Greyfriars manners, he is an apt representative of the hideous enthusiasms of the Tory back benchers. The effect of his intervention was to force yet another division, on a motion of closure, and add another 20 minutes to the evening's proceedings.

If the Tories really thought that they were going forward to the sound of gunfire, Labour was more subdued. It is not true, as the *Sun* had predicted, that they tramped through the lobbies 'with no more conviction than Angolan mercenaries to cast their vote for party loyalty' (a ridiculous comparison – if the Labour Members were Angolan mercenaries, then Mr Robert Mellish would have to be Callan. Let's keep a sense of proportion, shall we?) And yet there had been little attempt by the Government to win over much active support for the Dock Work Regulation Bill. The Labour case was rather drearily put and the Labour benches ill-attended. True, the matter was complex, and the dockers are hardly the most popular section of society. Yet there was nothing for Labour to be so coy about in putting through the legislation. It has been said, as if this was something shameful, that the Bill is a concession to Mr Jack Jones, the quid pro quo of the Social Contract. Certainly Mr Jones was keen on the measures, and wanted them to have precedence over the future legislation for the reorganisation of the docks, and certainly Mr Jones has a personal interest in protecting the dockers. But why not? Surely it is about time that Mr Jones got something out of the contract. Certainly it is time that something was done about the docks.

For the point of the Bill is not simply that it extends the opportunities for dock workers – it also attempts to halt the decline of the ports themselves. At the moment, revenue is lost to the registered ports as the non-registered wharves take their trade away. It is impossible for investment in the ports (the recent £35m. on the Humber, for instance) to pay off when at the same time their trade is being taken away by companies offering cheaper rates. These cheaper rates are based on lower wage bills, worse conditions for workers (often there is no sick pay and safety conditions are poor) and lower capital costs. But they are not necessarily based on greater efficiency. Indeed, there can be no overall efficiency if the existing ports are being run down in favour of their new competitors.

Mr John Prescott (an ex-docker and ex-seaman) put the matter of cost and efficiency most clearly in an example from Hull. It had been complained that unloading Russian timber was costing extra because the dockers were sitting down and not working. However, the trouble turned out, on investigation, to be nothing to do with the dockers. The firm had employed a lorry driver who did not have the necessary equipment for loading. He was from a small, cheaper firm, but the fact that he was not properly equipped meant that there were continual pauses when there was nothing for the dockers to do. So they would sit down. So they were blamed for putting up costs. At another point in the debate, an ill-advised Mr Cyril Smith gave comparative figures for unloading tea in London and Rotterdam. It turned out however that the difference in price was due not to the dockers but to the shipowners, who impose a levy of their own on unloading at certain ports. (A levy, incidentally, over which the Government appears to have no control. London is uncompetitive in comparison with Rotterdam because the shipowners have decided that it shall be.)

Those MPs associated with the docks industry deprecated strongly the image of the dockers as latterday Luddites who were resistant to all change. It was pointed out that modernisation of the docks had proceeded at a tremendous pace over the last years, together with a more than 50-per-cent reduction of the work force. What the dockers were out to do, and what the Bill sought, was to extend the standard of living enjoyed by dockers to other sections of the trade, and thereby end the process whereby trade was being drawn away from the ports. Of course there was a cost involved. And the nature of the cost was underlined by Mr Prescott: it was a question of ending cheap labour, a question of levelling up for the rest of the industry; the Conservatives believed that there should be levelling up, rather than down, in education. Why should not the same apply to the ports?

The debate, I must say, had its moments, not the least of which came when Mr James Prior made his appeal to the House for a greater understanding of the 'prejudices and emotions of the dockers'. Mr Prior! He even read us a poem 'from a character called Patchy in Liverpool':

> Forty years I've served you without a word of thanks
> Sweated and toiled the whole long day in freighters, barges, tanks,
> You've made millions from my body, even Deakin can't deny,
> And all I get when I am old is Die, you ——, die.

I wonder what Mrs Thatcher thought of that.

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David Leitch

Communism with a PR Face

Among the faithful thousands celebrating the final day of the French Communist Party's highly extraordinary 22nd congress near Le Bourget was a 30-year-old unmarried woman with the euphonious and symbolic name of France Merlin. At first glance Ms Merlin looks ordinary enough, although unusually determined, but her potted biography reveals her singularity. She was born in the Rhône valley, and got her first job in a biscuit factory. They went on strike, like 10 million other French workers, in the aftermath of May 1968, and Ms Merlin became an activist in the Communist CGT union shortly after. But after a while, as she told journalists gathered in the enormous Palais des Sports, she decided that 'trade union activity was not enough."

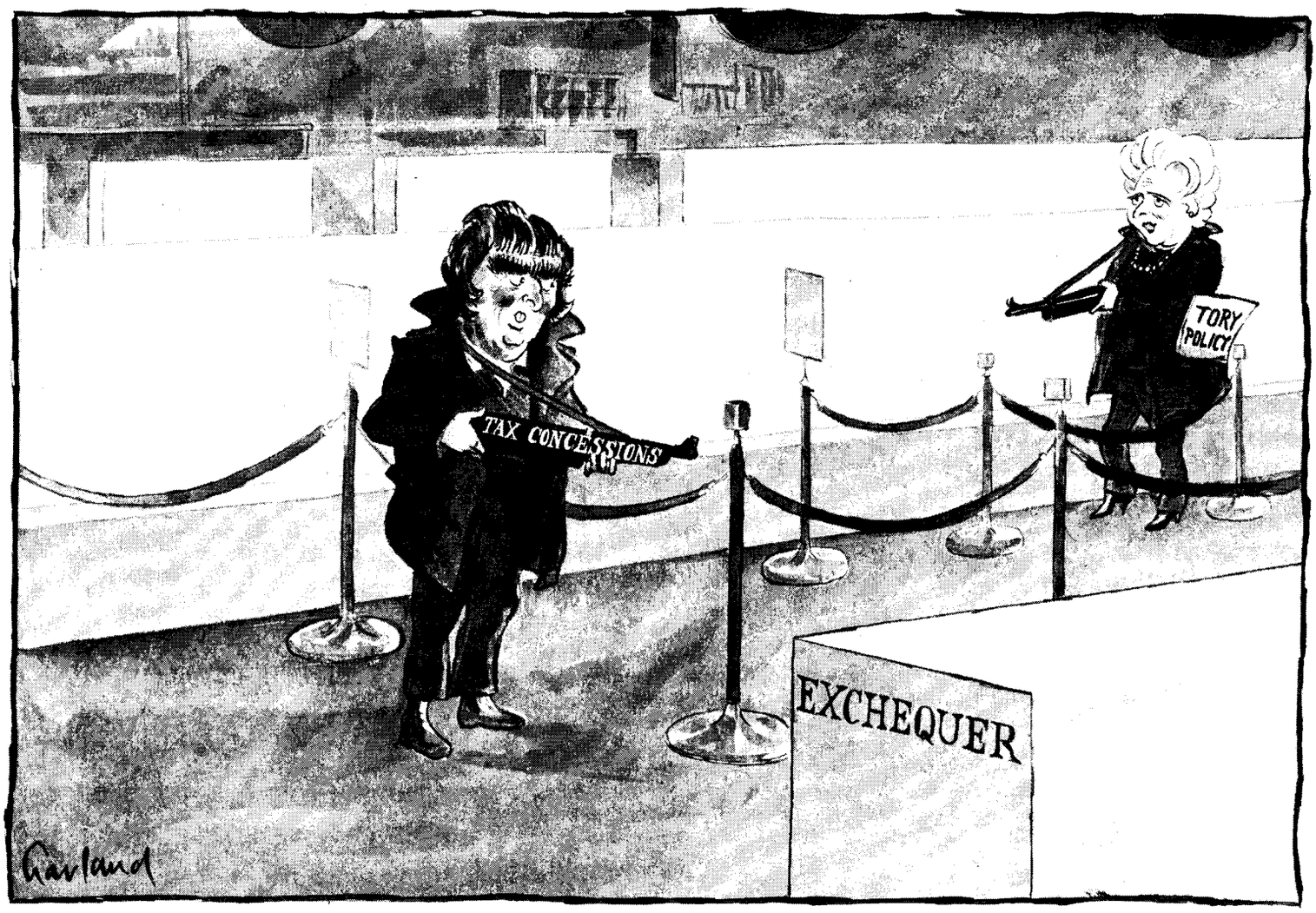
Thus in April 1972 she 'took the plunge' – in the evangelical ambience the PCF has recently acquired one almost expected her to say 'witnessed for Christ' – and joined the party. The rest is history. Although PCF workers are accustomed to the catch phrase 'you don't join the party to make a career', Ms Merlin found herself doing precisely that. In due course she came to work for the CGT full-time (salary £220 monthly) in their Rue Lafayette, Paris, headquarters. And last week, a mere 46 months after the fateful day when she got her first party card, Ms Merlin found herself elected to the Central Committee of the new-style PCF. Perhaps more unusually yet she was actually going around telling pressmen how it happened. Not very long ago she would have been more likely to have told them they were social fascists.

The change has been carefully angled for the media – not only no more 'dictatorship of the proletariat' but no more *Internationale* (the *Marseillaise* from now on) and no more clenched fists (instead, as Georges Marchais kept insisting, it is a matter of 'the open hand' of friendship). From now on the French Communist Party is going to be even more 'French' (and thus anti-Atlanticist) than ever before, and in domestic terms it will be using Ms Merlin and her 500,000 fellow card-carriers, one in 100 of the population, to develop what it calls the Union of the French People.

This might seem an impressive turnaround for one party congress, and the essential novelty of the new PCF orthodoxy, not to mention its style, has already brought the party more (guardedly favourable) media attention than it experienced under 10 years of Gaullism. The party stalwarts are in fact naïvely delighted by their new-won popularity with the TV cameras, and Georges Marchais, though obviously he cannot do anything about his face, has made heroic efforts to inject a certain revivalist uplift into his delivery style. (Many were struck by the fact that during one of his congress marathon addresses he actually addressed himself to the Christians of France. Originally he intended to launch a fierce attack on *'le porno'*, an example of capitalist decadence about which he feels strongly. However, he allowed himself to be dissuaded. It was thought that such sentiments sounded 'too *petit-bourgeois*'.)

It might be thought that so many changes – and promises from Marchais that there would be even more changes to come – would have provoked profound dissent from party veterans. Such has not been the case. There are two reasons for this impressive unanimity which, despite the occasional faint rumbles from such outposts of orthodoxy as the Pas de Calais, has never really looked like giving way to divisive internal debate. (François Mitterrand and some other leading members of the Socialist Party had expected more trouble in the ranks, and they have contained their chagrin with varying degrees of success.)

The ground for the congress had been well prepared at the level of the party's 98 'federations' which link individual cells with the Central Committee. According to



Was Patty Healey forced to take part in bank raid?

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Jean Kanapa, another rising star who with Marchais was the chief architect of the new political line, 22,705 delegates attended the federal conferences which preceded the congress – of these a mere 216 abstained on votes dealing with the excision of the phrase about 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' from party statutes, while only 113 members actually voted against.

The dogma may have had to be trimmed a bit in the light of a changing politico-economic situation, the machine, as might be expected, remains as efficient and all-embracing as ever. No one has any intention of monkeying around with the concept of 'democratic centralism', which keeps the party firmly in line.

Secondly, the PCF has for about a year now been noticeably concerned to stress the exigencies of the present and immediate future at the expense, if need be, of the past. Ms Merlin, typical except for her extravagant success, describes May '68 as her formative political experience, and not one that impressed her with the staying power of the 'Leftists'. The PCF claim, probably accurately, that of their half-million activists, getting on for two-thirds joined the party in the last seven years – that is, post May '68, which makes the old guard, with their Stalinist memories, noticeably thin on the ground. Over one-third of new recruits in the last three years have been women, and, judging by the almost statesmanlike restraint shown by the Young Communist delegates, scant destructive autocriticism can be expected from that quarter.

Their leader, Pierre Zarka, modestly mentioned that since youth and liberty went together some reservations about 'these countries now constructing socialism' should be excused. He might have gone a lot further. Certainly the party newspaper itself, in a tone more of sorrow than rancour, now regularly reports the latest outrages from Moscow, even if they bowdlerised some of the more nauseous sufferings that, for instance, Leonid Plyutch underwent in the USSR.

Although there have been commentators talking about the PCF 'changing its spots' it is more a matter of evolution in a strategy as old as the PCF itself. Maurice Thorez himself attended the first Paris Congress, as a delegate from the Pas de Calais federation in 1922, and in later years was known to wax quite sentimental about it. 'What a long road has been covered,' he wrote, in that inimitable party prose. 'The problems of the unity of the working class, of the united front with the Socialist Party, were then posed for the first time. From that distant epoch we have since struggled without respite to liquidate the split, to unify all workers in a single combat front . . .'

Later, in 1934 and '35, Thorez set himself 'to liquidate the split' in earnest, first by forming the Popular Front with the Leon Blum Socialists, and then in the interests of 'organic unity' making a sporting effort to take over the Socialists with a goal no longer respectable since the 22nd congress, i.e. 'the violent overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie which will lead to the installation of the dictatorship of the proletariat (and also soviets) organised on the model of the great party of Lenin and Stalin.' There were many references to this historic alliance when the accord with the Mitterrand Socialists was signed in 1972. There was not, to put it mildly, a great deal said about these Socialists during the congress, although the accord still holds good, and unless any untoward 'splits' occur may well give the combined Left an 'Italian'-style victory at local elections next year, and parliamentary ones the year after.

Meanwhile the Mitterrand Socialists themselves have reacted to the congress with some caution, pleasantly characterised by one commentator 'as a kind of prudent *attentisme*'. They have, however, circulated their own report on the Communist changes which contains one interesting and very likely accurate assessment of the PCF's intentions. 'Their objective will be to take over the role of the Socialist Party without abandoning their own (indeed at the industrial level they are talking in terms of monopoly). In other words an Italian dream . . . '

We shall see the reality between now and the elections. Ms Merlin will need all her ideological wizardry to keep pace with it.

Paris

Andrew Cockburn

The Prince and the Arms Dealers

Fred Meuser, former European sales director of Lockheed aircraft, offered a kindly bit of business advice a few weeks ago. 'Ever since the ancient Phoenicians invented trade,' he explained patiently, 'people have given each other little presents.' The latest revelations in Washington from Senator Frank Church's sub-committee on multinational companies indicate that the presents have grown a little bigger since Phoenician times. In the hearings last week the president of Lockheed described a payment of $876,000 to a Turkish 'consultant' as 'modest'.

The inquiry that now threatens to undermine the Dutch throne started in fact with a little present at home in the United States. The Watergate Special Prosecutor discovered that the Northrop Corporation, one of the big military aircraft contractors, had made an illegal contribution to President Nixon's CREEP via one of their Paris agents. The Securities and Exchange Commission, followed by the Church committee on multinationals, set out to discover how this Paris agent came to have such a large sum of money on hand.

Documents disgorged by Northrop revealed that selling military aircraft is not a simple matter of prettily made promotional films and a learned exposition of technical data. What, the business is all about it seems, is 'influence' or, more crudely, bribes. 'Influence' was succinctly described by a Pentagon official in 1974: '. . . it can range from normal friendships or family ties between a local and procuring officer to the payment of substantial sums of money to individuals in high government positions . . .'

From the Northrop documents it emerged that the invisible sales operation far exceeded in scope and expenditure any visible activity that the company might mount to peddle their wares. Northrop had paid at least $450,000 to their agent in Saudi Arabia, Adnan Khashoogi, to bribe two generals. In Europe they had set up a Swiss corporation which received a steady income from a commission on the sales of a particular type of aircraft. The interesting thing about this corporation – EDC – was that Northrop did not know who most of the shareholders were, merely that they were high-ranking European government officials who wished to keep their regular sweeteners from Northrop quiet.

Northrop, cross-questioned in Senate hearings on their behaviour, pleaded in mitigation that they were simply doing things Lockheed's way in order to compete. So the committee began to look into Lockheed's dealings. Once they started to investigate one of Lockheed's biggest-ever sales successes, the Starfighter, the embarrassing rumours about Prince Bernhard and Franz Josef Strauss were bound to surface.

All of which raises interesting implications for Nato, particularly at the moment. That venerable institution has been enjoying rather good publicity lately. Margaret Thatcher cautions the Tories of South Kensington to put guns before butter, General Haig issues grave warnings from Nato HQ, and every schoolboy knows that the Soviet Navy is bigger than ever before. This, of course, should be good news for the arms manufacturers. But the revelations about the activities of the arms salesmen are likely to have a rather different effect. Joe Biden, a Democratic Senator from Delaware with an eye for the camera, expressed one kind of concern when he said to Dan Haughton, chairman of Lockheed:

> In my opinion you may have corrupted the system . . . you have a situation in Italy . . . the Italians aren't embracing the Communist Party because the Communist Party represents a point of view they reflect, they are embracing the Communist Party because the other parties have been shown to be so replete with corruption.

In view of the fact that both Prince Bernhard and Franz Josef Strauss are pillars of the European right-wing Establishment, it will be interesting to see how the Dutch, and the Germans, react. They are not, after all, so blasé about high-level venality in these matters as the Italians.

Prince Bernhard himself is a far more potent political figure in Holland than is our own vocal Prince Philip at home. Though best known in Britain for his exertions on behalf of endangered fauna as chairman of the World Wildlife Fund, he takes a considerable interest in politics. In

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1971 he told an interviewer that the Dutch Parliament would do well to dissolve itself for two years and, equally, the Government to resign. Less jocularly, he is the founder and chairman of the curious Bilderberg group, a highly secretive, grand, insiders' organisation which brings together like- and Right-minded very top people for periodic discussions. If Margaret Thatcher goes to the next meeting, as she did to the last, she will no doubt be able to reinforce her own prejudices by asking her fellow-members, Strauss and the Prince, for their views on Nato. Prince Bernhard, incidentally, garnered his aviation experience as an employee of Hermann Goering in the fledgling Luftwaffe in the 1930s. Later on he worked for the infamous IG Farben chemical combine while at the same time joining the SS. He did, however, put aside all things German when he married Juliana in 1937.

Bernhard's great coup came in 1961, when Lockheed now allege they paid him at least $1m. for the use of his influence on the Starfighter contract. He was then, and is now, Inspector-General of the Dutch Air Force. The Germans had their Starfighters modified to equip them for a strategic role; the Dutch, whose Nato mission was as short-range interceptors, saw no reason why they should buy the same expensive equipment changes. Which is where Bernhard's usefulness may have come in. He appears to have persuaded the pettifogging staff officers to go ahead and order the changes. This role seems occasionally to have given rise to most unroyal squabbles over money. At one time Ernest J. Hauser, who was part of the money chain from Fred Meuser, noted in his diary: 'Gerritson [Lockheed's Dutch agent] has HRH hanging on his arse; he wants all – the bastard.'

Ernest Hauser had other concerns on his mind at the time. He was personally in charge of smoothing the flow of payments from Lockheed to the coffers of Franz Josef Strauss's right-wing party, the CSU. The payments were generous, as they should have been. Strauss, as Minister of Defence, had placed an order for 700 Starfighters with Lockheed – and there was the question of the lucrative equipment changes too. These Starfighters, loaded down with the numerous and expensive modifications, crashed with monotonous regularity throughout the Sixties and early Seventies. No fewer than 177 in 14 years, in fact, with 85 pilots killed. The effect of these crashes on Nato's military preparedness is of course impossible to compute.

The brantub Nato attitude to contracts is also exemplified by the Italians. In the Sixties the Italians had a Nato ground combat role. But nevertheless they ordered large numbers of expensive transport planes from Lockheed after $2m had gone into political and military coffers. As a Pentagon official later admitted: 'With these people it's the buck not the bang that counts.' Or as Frank Church put it: 'This is where the whole practice becomes so venal. If you base your sales on pay-offs to government officials, and make them rich, then you force the government in the direction of more of the same when other purchases might be more beneficial.'

As happened in both the Netherlands and West Germany?

Christopher Hitchens

Stirrings in Catalonia

The centre of Spanish politics has shifted temporarily to Catalonia, and the streets of Barcelona are full of demonstrators for the second week running. This is no cause for surprise: Barcelona has always been a city of stubborn resistance to Francoism, and has been punished for its attitude by 30 years of cultural subordination, economic choking and political neglect. Although Catalan is no longer forbidden (after the Civil War it was known by the regime as 'the language of dogs') no business or legal proceeding may be transacted in it, and letters written to prisoners in Catalan are rerouted via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Madrid. For this reason, given the fact that up to 80 per cent of Catalans speak their own tongue, protest and organisation are given an extra dimension, and so of course is solidarity.

Just as, during the Civil War, almost all social forces combined to put down the fascist revolt within Catalonia itself, the present resistance is very broadly based. I found myself recently in the air-conditioned office of the president of the Catalan Bank, listening while Jordi Pujol described his past prison sentence for sedition and outlined his plans for a future Catalan Assembly. In embryo, this body already exists and has the formal adherence of every political party in the region (or 'nation' as its partisans are quick to remind you). It has carried out illegal parliamentary meetings in the magnificent abbey of Montserrat, which straddles a mountain just outside Barcelona and still shelters hunger-striking priests. It has called strikes and rallies and certainly organised last Sunday's massive show of strength.

In area, Catalonia is about the size of Holland or Maryland. It was a nation state while other parts of Spain were mere dynastic holdings. It has a long democratic and autonomous tradition, together with a thriving industrial and commercial base. The combination of prosperity and political grievance is (as Scots have found) a very dynamic one, and Catalonia's working class has always been the most militant. Recently, Barcelona has been the scene of Spain's first sit-ins, its first strike by journalists against censorship, and its first arrest of a serving officer for political activity.

For all these reasons, Catalonia has been hated and feared by the Castilian oligarchy which dominates Spain. No Catalan holds any post of importance in the armed forces or the civil service, and until a recent token addition no Catalan had ever sat in a Francoist cabinet. When the regime was busily busing in minor functionaries and congregations to Madrid for a pro-dictatorship rally before Christmas, they did not even bother to try to stage one in Barcelona. But they have tried to ruin the city. They cancelled the Republican rebuilding scheme by Gaudi and Corbusier, instead flooding its outskirts with migrant workers housed in the grimmest possible blocks. But it remains a stunningly beautiful place, and the spiritual home of Picasso, Juan Miro, Pablo Casals and Salvador Dali. This element of Catalan pride leads to major political differences on the Left, for while all parties are agreed on the need for autonomy there is an element which desires total separation from Spain. Apart from the tactical problems involved in this position, it makes most of the Assembly leaders very nervous for the excellent reason that nothing would be more calculated to provoke a military intervention.

The very symbol of the Falange is the arrows and oxbow devised by Ferdinand and Isabella to stand for the total and rigid unity of Spain. It is the main fetish of the regime; to flout it in Catalonia or the Basque country, let alone to argue for it in Madrid, is to risk torture and detention at once. The much heralded and largely empty 'reform package' of the present Government significantly omits any mention of restoring national rights in these areas. To give one indication of how deeply this is felt, Catalonia had its own police force, Parliament, high court and education system by a statute of 1932.

To have had and lost that within memory is an enormous source of political energy. It binds people together, to the extent that while the national communist and socialist parties operate in different clandestine coalitions, their Catalan counterparts meet under the same umbrella. The communists find it convenient to call themselves the United Catalan Socialist Party in this context, but nobody is taken in by that.

The church, which has played in Catalonia the role that religious organisation played in Ireland, say, or Cyprus, remains

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a powerful nationalist focus. When the police or Civil Guard get nervous in Barcelona, they generally arrest Father Luis Xirinacs, a veteran of many vigils and hunger strikes who was last year nominated by hundreds of academics and clergymen for the Nobel Peace Prize. His arrest last Sunday followed a daily one-man protest outside the central prison in Barcelona, where despite attacks by fascist gangs (customarily immune from the police), supporters joined him every day with food and encouragement.

Catalonia really symbolises all the contradictions of Spain. It is the only region of the country which has the resources to open business subsidiaries in other parts of Europe, but is denied access to the Common Market. Its language and culture are trampled upon by a regime which is terrified of ideas but no longer has any very strong ones of its own. It generates nearly 25 per cent of the national income of Spain and yet receives only a tithe of that for development. Quite simply, it has outgrown Francoism faster and more comprehensively than the rest of the country. In free elections it would probably return a leftist-nationalist majority of the sort it displayed before the advent of fascism, and the communists would be somewhat stronger than before by virtue of the new working class and the very strong development of underground workers' commissions in the automobile and textile belt around Barcelona.

There seems to be no way of reconciling its aspirations with those of the new government, and although Catalans have so far preferred mass organisation to bombs and guns there is a chance of serious violence if the repression persists. Spain-watchers will need to give less attention to the politicking of the Madrid court and find out more about the geography of Barcelona, where Victor Serge witnessed the 1917 insurrection and began his *Birth of our Power*.

Tom Forester

Faulty Towers

When tenants of Brighton's council tower blocks started getting sand in their faces every time the wind blew, they doubted whether it had come from Brighton's shingle beach. It didn't take them long to realise that it was coming from the mortar between the brickwork holding up their high-rise homes. Now Brighton council faces a probable bill of £500,000 for the urgent repointing of 14 blocks, and this closely follows bills of £16,500 for waterproofing work on two others, and over £100,000 to replace window frames on another ten-year-old structure.

The council appear not to have noticed that in most coastal towns the buildings, especially in seafront locations, are painted. On bare brickwork, on tall, exposed towers, the salt and wind-driven rain don't run off, but soak in, attacking the mortar and eroding it at an alarming speed.

Brighton's problems may be peculiar, but they are not unique. A glance at the horror stories in the pages of *Construction News*, the *Municipal Journal* or the *Architects' Journal* over the last year reveals a staggering list of costly design faults, building failures and huge maintenance bills for modern buildings. A high proportion involve municipal projects, and most of these appear to be cases of council-house building done on the cheap. Tower blocks, in particular, have proved to be, in economic terms, a costly failure.

Last June the repair bill for two leaking high-rise council blocks in Paddington was £100,000. But the residents of the Elgin estate remain unimpressed and expect the dampness and corrosion to continue. The firm given a £37,000 contract in 1972/3 to put right fractured cladding on the outside of the buildings (a process expected to take a year) was still on site in 1975. Basingstoke are paying out £220,000 in maintenance for 92 three-bedroomed flats which cost £370,000 to build three years ago. Windows, timber frames and cladding have all failed, and many tenants will have to be moved out while repairs are completed.

At Salford last year the main columns supporting three 10-year-old 15-storey blocks were found to have "spalled" i.e., they were falling to pieces. The contractors had used calcium chloride in the cement, a substance used to accelerate hardening in cold weather. The repair bill was £50,000. The use of calcium chloride was not banned by the Property Services Agency until 1974. In Birmingham, the problem was with the cladding. These concrete panels on the exterior of modern blocks are a constant source of trouble, and at Birmingham's Nechells House – a block for businesses disturbed by redevelopment – they started moving soon after the building was finished. The London Borough of Newham have had the same problem with some of their 108 high-rise blocks: 14 have already had to be attended to for cracked brickwork and cladding. Poor Newham. Not only did they have Ronan Point, which collapsed after a gas explosion seven years ago (nationally, it led to £80m. being spent on the emergency strengthening of 235 tower blocks); they also had to pay out £360,000 just to remove and replace gas cookers in most of their blocks.

Newham, too, has had problems with flat roofs, as have many local authorities all over the country – like Bath, Glasgow, Aldershot, Andover and Milton Keynes. Now flat roofs have not historically been very popular in rainy countries, for the simple reason that they tend to collect rather than disperse water. But they are cheap, although some local authorities like Staffordshire have proved that it pays in the long run to erect maintenance-free, old-fashioned sloping roofs. At Bath, leaking flat roofs on 20 multi-storey blocks have been costing thousands of pounds over the last few years. Last year the city engineer estimated that the cost of permanent repair would be £110,000. In Glasgow, pressure from tenants in the damp-ridden, flat-roofed Towerhill flats at Knightswood have led Glasgow corporation to consider blacklisting certain local contracting firms. A contract worth £136,000 recently went to a Glasgow firm for re-sealing work on the Milton North multi-storey flats.

The troubles at Aldershot, Andover and Milton Keynes all involve flat roofs in schemes which are less than ten years old: At Aldershot external joinery will need replacing, as will the roofs, for water has been running along ceiling joists inside many council houses. At Andover, an RIBA award-winning estate built in 1968 may well cost £3m. to put right. It has been estimated that most of the 353 council houses have serious defects, mainly caused because drainpipes put *inside* the walls started to leak. At Milton Keynes, the Netherfield estate suffers from both flat-roof problems and 'springy' floors. Aluminium cladding, too, falls off in high winds. The cost of repairs is estimated at £2,666 per dwelling.

Writing in the *Municipal Journal* last November, Michael Hanson argued that building defects of all kinds – cracking, the various forms of dampness, and the detachment of tiles, floor finishes and paint – are becoming increasingly common. We seem to be paying the price for 'cheap' building in the Sixties. He quotes the Institute of Structural Engineers as saying: 'There is an ever-pressing demand for elegant low-cost solutions within a pricing system that is always erratic.' But cost is not the only problem. Studies of over 500 defective buildings by the Building Research Advisory Service over the period 1970-74 revealed that more than 90 per cent were due to faults in design and construction which could have been foreseen.

Eleven per cent of the buildings with faults had defects which could endanger life. Yet – to take just one example from the list that includes gas explosions and high alumina cement (HAC) – the problem of the effect of wind on high buildings was not seriously studied by the Building Research Establishment until 1964. Today wind tunnel testing of a new building cost no more than £2,000 but far too many architects and builders are prone to cost cutting at the design stage. As *Construction News* has pointed out the life of a modern building can be summed up as follows: for every £1 spent on design, building cost amount to £10, but maintenance now work out at £100.

Before the last Conservative Government changed the rules, the Building Research Establishment merely did research that it considered necessary, and then waited for people to ask for results. Now it is free to undertake sponsored research, but this means that it looks at problems only when someone pays the bill. Something, somewhere is wrong when a general rise in living standards is accompanied by a general fall in building and housing standards especially for the least well-off.

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John Vaizey

The Roulette of Public Spending

The White Paper on Public Expenditure comes out next week. It represents a major change in Labour's social philosophy. Private expenditure now requires no justification: provided that an individual family is not spending too much, and other individual families have enough to live on, there is no reason why people should have to justify to public opinion what they spend their own incomes on. That may seem a revolutionary statement, but it accords strongly with the recorded experience of trade unionists. There has been over the past few years a good deal of investigation of how trade union members react to income policies and to tax changes, and it is fairly clear that they attach considerable weight to their own command over real income and their own ability to spend as much as they can, as they wish. Talk of the 'social wage' is largely an ideological construct which bears little direct relation to the behaviour of ordinary wage-earners in wage negotiations.

Public expenditure, on the other hand, does not provide its own justification. The aims for which it is determined are either good or bad or indifferent, depending upon people's view of the legislation under which the expenditure is undertaken. It does not follow that the progressive substitution of public expenditure for private expenditure is desirable in itself, nor that it necessarily and of itself achieves social democratic objectives like fairness, social justice and a better standard of living for all. Indeed, since public expenditure is subject only to the remotest scrutiny by Parliament and by the local authorities who undertake it, there is good cause for saying that the expansion of public expenditure ought to be much more carefully examined than it is, and that at the present juncture the substitution of public expenditure for private expenditure, particularly when the private expenditure is that which is normally undertaken by working-class families, is undesirable in itself.

The present level of public expenditure has been arrived at by historical accident. It has grown from the 40 per cent or so of gross national product in the latter years of the 1950s to something nearing 60 per cent at the present time. In the Wilson government of 1964 to 1970 the proportion rose from the low 40s to the high 40s, and under the present Administration there has been a very substantial increase indeed. This proportion arises partly from the pressure to increase public expenditure, which has been common to most Western countries since the mid-1950s, but it also arises from the failure to achieve rates of growth of the economy which were expected when the public expenditure plans were first made. Had the historically high rates of the growth of the economy that were foreseen when NEDC was first formed, and when the George Brown National Plan was first adumbrated, been achieved, then the growth of private outlays by families and individuals would have been substantial, and at the same time the proportion of the national income devoted to public expenditure could have increased, with substantial improvements in the public services.

Those who have argued that public expenditure is necessarily good in itself have to explain how they can justify this view in the absence of any apparent coherent strategy of public expenditure as a whole. Any dispassionate observer of the scene must draw attention to the fact that very large sections of public expenditure appear to be mutually contradictory. Thus the substantial expenditure on the Foreign Office and on the pay and remuneration of upper civil servants (all of which have been vociferously justified in a carefully orchestrated campaign in the letter columns of *The Times* and in leading articles by diplomatic and political correspondents) runs directly contrary to the notion of the use of public expenditure as a means of creating equality. The great growth of expenditure on the preservation of jobs in the nationalised industries through underwriting their deficits runs directly contrary to the process of using public expenditure for the creation of new jobs in a new industrial structure. Similarly, the price subsidy policy has by and large benefited the better off, while the different parts of the housing subsidy programme are notoriously in a state of chaos.

Total Public Expenditure as a percentage of GNP

1955	41.34
1960	41.08
1965	44.65
1970	49.94
1974	56.24

Source: Economic Trends Annual Supplement, 1975, p.32.

There is in fact a complete lack of an overall strategy for public expenditure and for determining its proper level and the fundamental purposes for which it is undertaken. It is this more than anything which has led to the verifiable fact that the growth of public expenditure in the past few years has been out of control. Each individual department has been pressing its own case for public expenditure and the total pressure for public expenditure has gone considerably beyond the capacity of the economy, as it is at present organised, to pay for it. Thus the system known as PESC is a system which is inherently explosive. It postulates a level of the rate of growth of the national income which is then translated into a level of public expenditure on an annual basis projected over time. These projections are the result of the adding up of individual programmes submitted by individual departments, subject to some rather crude control by cabinet committees and the network of official committees which underlies them.

Inevitably, in the warm atmosphere of Whitehall, these individual programmes are neither properly costed nor are they properly vetted, since it is always expected that if cuts have to come they will be absorbed by another department rather than by the one under consideration. *Thus there are no commanding ideas which determine the proper level of public expenditure.* There is no system of priority which accords top priority to the development of productive industry, followed by the growth of egalitarian social measures, for example. The total pattern of public expenditure is built up like a mosaic, with each individual department and sub-department putting its own little bit in, and the sum total represents the pattern of public expenditure. This contrasts directly with the experience overseas, where a few commanding ideas set the total pattern of government activity. And it was the original idea behind the National Plan that this should be the case for public expenditure in this country, though again the National Plan as it ultimately appeared represented the triumph of the individual departmental view.

The Treasury historically has exercised control on an annual basis. It has done this by the rigorous investigation of the costing of individual programmes; a process which has been undermined by inflation. There has never been a department in Whitehall which has taken a strategic view of the development of public expenditure as a whole over a long – say, 20-year – period with a view to making it subject to certain overriding objectives, where the consideration of individual cost effectiveness was less vital (though still important) than the total effectiveness of the programme as a whole in achieving national objectives. It would seem at the present time, after some 80 years of relative industrial decline, that one national target asserts itself as that which should override all others, and that is the reconstruction of the industrial basis of the British economy; and this should be followed by another, namely the acceptance of a broad pattern of distribution of incomes and of their rate of growth which will enable industrial harmony and the elimination of poverty to be achieved.

This would mean that the subordination of individual targets to the overall target could be effectively policed. In particular the strategy would have to recognise that the top priority was the rapid running down of old industries, the creation of conditions

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in which new industries could be enlarged; the next priority is the development of a process by which the real incomes of productive workers in particular could expand rapidly; and at the same time the social priorities accorded to the old, the young and the indigent must be protected. This suggests at once that the first priority for the controlling of public expenditure is the establishment of some kind of National Plan which would cover the economy as a whole, including the private sector.

Furthermore, it must be recognised that the present level of public expenditure is the outcome of a series of accidents which happen to have come to rest at about 60 per cent of the national income rather than, as some apologists both for the Heath government and the present government would mainly choose to say, that it represents the planned outcome of a shift of resources from the private sector to the public sector. In fact it represents the collapse of any hope of achieving the rate of economic growth which was in the early 1960s thought not only desirable but achievable, and the triumph of individual departmental objectives, many of which are in direct conflict with the desire to achieve the three national priorities which have been set out above.

The fact that the only way that an acceptable incomes policy could be introduced and that the real incomes of the workers could be increased would be by cutting public expenditure is self-evident from what has just been said. It follows, therefore, that the central question which arises is how to cut public expenditure adequately (far more dramatically than is at present envisaged) while at the same time redirecting its activities in the directions of industrial reconstruction and social justice.

The Treasury's Failure

It is worth while analysing the purposes of public expenditure at present and suggesting the ways in which it might be brought properly under control and the determination made as to what is its proper level in relation to the expected requirements for private consumption and private investment – the two great priorities for the restoration of economic health, including the establishment of a satisfactory distributions of incomes. In the first place, public expenditure is under great pressure at the present time, both in an upwards and a downwards direction, because of the need to establish some method of controlling the economy in the short term. Beginning with J. C. R. Dow's classic book on the subject, it has been demonstrated conclusively that the attempt to control the economy in the short run by the manipulation of the level of public expenditure, whether of current expenditure or of capital expenditure, is a will o' the wisp. There is no doubt at all that it is beyond the power of the Treasury and the expenditure departments as at present constructed to control the level of public expenditure to such a degree of fine tuning that it can stabilise the rate of growth of the economy in the short run. The effect is almost certainly destabilising. In fact it is this fine tuning which has led to the lack of control of the economy in any long-term sense.

We are seeing at the present time an attempt to restrict public expenditure in the relatively short term which once more conflicts with some of the long-term objectives of public expenditure. The attempt of the Plowden Committee, by establishing the system of PESC and by other medium-term devices, to arrange a forward look at public expenditure has in fact merely been the extension into the longer term of the short-run procedures for determining the level of public expenditure, which have historically proved inescapably destabilising. It follows, therefore, that from the point of view of the short-term control of the economy, the movement away from small shifts up and down should be encouraged and that some attempt should be made to move the total level of public expenditure in a downwards direction over the medium and long term.

This relates of course to the dispute (which has now entered what Sir Jeremy Morse calls a 'theological' level, both to the discredit of theology and of economics) about the relative importance of monetarism and the maintenance of a steady budgetary objective. Monetarism is so complex a doctrine that many of its tenets seem now to be no longer operational targets. It is I think far more consonant with its own stated objectives and with the objectives of any other form of control of the economy that attention should be now paid to the attempt to stabilise the rate of decline of public expenditure in the medium run. In view of the fact that the present level of expenditure is far too high, this must mean steady progress in reducing the level of public expenditure in relation to the national income – which either means holding it steady as the national income is expected to grow or substantially reducing the level of public expenditure if the national income is not expected to grow as rapidly as all that.

Percentage of GNP on government activities

	1964	1969	1974
Defence	6.77	5.76	5.72
Transport & Communications	1.71	1.93	2.56
Other industry & trade	3.05	4.65	5.04
Housing & Environment	4.57	5.14	7.85
Education	4.78	5.88	6.58
NHS	3.81	4.43	5.16
Social Security benefits	7.08	8.95	9.25
Total social services	16.37	20.23	22.28
Debt interest	4.56	5.14	5.04

It would be more prudent probably to adopt the second course. This then turns the argument to the total strategy of public expenditure in relation to the growth of the national income. Here, of course, there is one large lion in the path, labelled 'Defence'. As a matter of historic fact, the total expenditure on defence has fallen to one half of the level which prevailed in the early 1950s. It would be highly optimistic projection which estimated any further cuts in defence in the long run, and which indeed did not allow for substantial increases for defence, both to counter internal terrorist activity and also to face renewed attacks on Nato from outside. It must be anticipated, therefore, that in terms of manpower and sophisticated equipment the defence budget is far more likely to grow than to contract (the Left might note that this would apply *a fortiori* were we to join the Warsaw Pact and leave Nato).

Our stated priorities raise the complex question of public support for industry, commerce and other economic activities. This at the present time takes several forms; first, the widespread subsidies for the nationalised industries; secondly, the very substantial grants given directly and indirectly to private business, particularly under the heading of regional policy; and, thirdly, the substantial payments made to consumers under the heading of an attempt to control the level of prices. (I argued in the NEW STATESMAN some years ago that the only effective way of controlling the inflation which we have since lived through was a total price freeze and facing the budgetary consequences of such a freeze. In fact we have only adopted something like one sixth of that policy, consequently the policy has been less than one sixth successful.) Taking the last first, over the next few years there seems little economic or social justification for the maintenance of price subsidies at the present level. They are highly indiscriminate, almost certainly regressive, and unlikely to achieve the ultimate purpose for which they were established: namely, to restrict the level of inflation by damping down the demand of trade unions for higher wages – a demand which can be met only by some long-term incomes determination.

Prices and Profitability

Indeed, the nationalised industries have been thrown into complete managerial confusion by repeated government attempts to control their prices without regard to their profitability and the substitution of no alternative system of managerial objectives for the original requirement that they should achieve some minimum level of profitability. Furthermore, the great majority of nationalised industries are in sectors where the long-run trend should be toward the shedding of labour, and it follows therefore that the existing policy has considerably dampened down the possibility of raising the rate of growth of the economy as a whole. In any realistic sense the long-run policy of the economy requires the virtual elimination of price subsidies at their present level, the elimination of nationalised industry deficits and the re-institution of the original profit objectives of the nationalised industries. This would in itself leave several thousand millions pounds available for other expenditure.

On the issue of regional expenditure, there is considerable controversy. Many economists have argued that the present level of regional expenditure is so indiscriminate, both with reference to its geographical extent and also to those industries which it subsidises, that in fact it is almost certainly counter-productive. Moore and Rhodes, two Cambridge economists, have on the contrary argued that certain aspects of regional policy have actually effected an increase in the total level of national income. Even if they are correct, and it seems that they probably are, there are grounds for arguing that regional policy

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should be concentrated far more narrowly both geographically and in terms of individual projects, which also accords of course with the EEC regional policy to which this country will presumably increasingly conform.

This then leaves the question as to whether or not 'aid' to expanding firms and businesses throughout the country should be concentrated largely in the form of grants or whether it should take the form of tax cuts and tax incentives. In principle, the experience of the British economy has indicated that neither subsidies nor tax incentives are particularly effective with regard to private investment. It does suggest, however, that the level of consumer demand for output from the private sector is of some importance, and it might well be that the policy of increasing private incomes, with particular reference to the necessity for the growth of lower incomes, could be of considerable significance in this regard. Certainly it would represent a reversion from the trends of direct support for investment of the past 20 years.

This then raises the issue of the next priority, the social services. In the past 20 years, broadly speaking, the decline of defence expenditure has been overtaken by the rise of education expenditure and above all by expenditure on the social services. The rise in the standard of living of old people in the 1970s has been as dramatic as the rise in the standard of living of income earners was during the mid-1950s. At the same time education has now become by far the biggest element in the Budget after the social services themselves. The social services must be divided into two: those which are concerned with incomes maintenance, like retirement pensions, unemployment and sickness benefit, and on the other hand direct expenditure on social work. Income maintenance is a good thing, but the unfortunate outcome of investigations of various attempts to increase social equality through the social services has suggested that a substantial part of the expenditure is regressive, in housing, health and education. Possibly the same is true of social work?

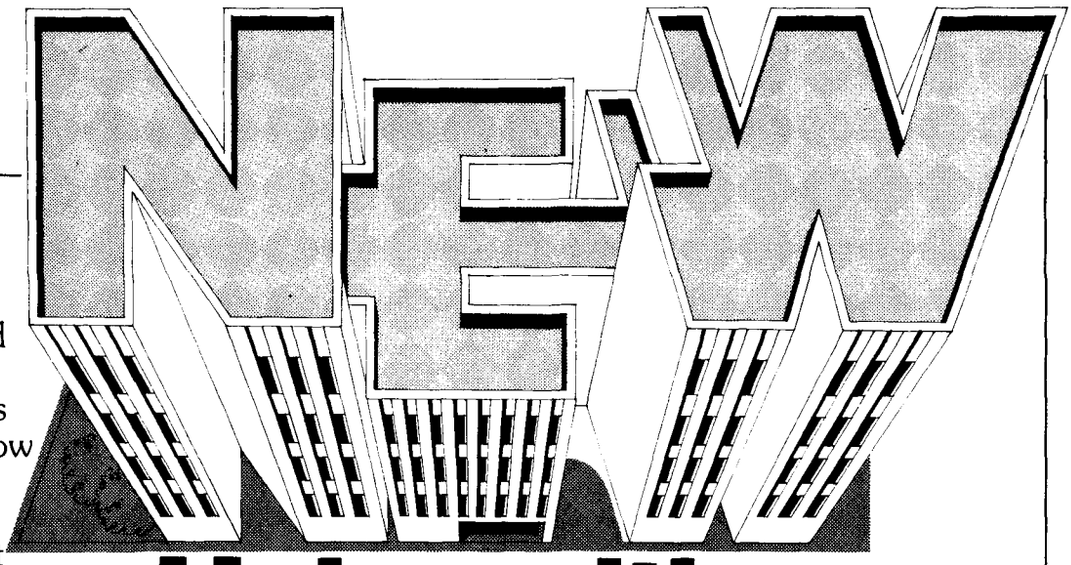
These subjects will be dealt with at greater length in other articles, but it is certainly very far from being the case that any increase in education or health outlays either necessarily and directly increases the effectiveness of educational attainment or of health care, or is influential in redistributing income in favour of the poor. In such circumstances the development of the 'social wage', which health and education are supposed to be an important part of, represents in fact a diminution of individual choice with no very evident positive benefit on the part of many of the recipients of public expenditure.

We may now turn to the broad question of why public expenditure grew out of control. We know from the answer of the Treasury to the statements made by Mr Wynne Godley that this has arisen, first, because of their incorrect forecast of the rise of public sector incomes – and we know from the investigations of Mr David Layton and Incomes Data Services that these rises were in excess of those that were admitted by the public service arbitration bodies and the Government itself; secondly, they arose from unplanned changes in policy which were not properly costed by the Treasury. And thirdly, there was the rise in the costs of existing services which arose from imperfect government control of the public sector.

It follows, therefore, that one of the major tasks which must follow any attempt to bring public expenditure under control and substantially to reduce it, both in aggregate and as a proportion of the national income, would be an attempt to re-establish, or to establish for the first time in certain respects, a thoroughgoing review of priorities and a review of actual expenditure. This would involve some attempt to bring public servants into the incomes policy in a realistic sense, and some attempt also to judge whether the expenditure on such items as education was in a realistic sense cost-effective, judging cost-effective by the broadest terms of the Government's priorities.

If these priorities were, as I have suggested, the restoration of the industrial competitiveness of the economy and the achievement of some broadly accepted sense of social justice, including an adequate growth of private incomes, then this at least would give some fairly simple dual criteria for the control of expenditure. (It is worth mentioning in parenthesis that the enormous level of debt service is directly due to the

They sound like a roll-call from Shakespeare: York and Lancaster, Colchester and Canterbury, Essex and Warwick – and Brighton. The seven new universities set up in the sixties have now been open for a decade. They were going to chart new maps of learning – but are their arteries hardening? In a new series, starting with Lancaster, in the THES this week, Peter Wilby assesses their successes and their failures.



Also this week:
David Martin on 'Keywords,' the new book by Raymond Williams, 'a muddler with a talent for moralising'
Bernard Crick on two Hamlets
John Saville on Labour History
School science and universities

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high levels of interest rates which have prevailed now for 20 years and which have fulfilled none of the functions which allegedly kept them high, namely the safeguarding of the balance of payments, the rationing of investment and the stimulation of the flow of private funds into industry. An era of cheap money might well be one of the most potent causes of a fall in the level of public expenditure, with dramatic benefits in the level of taxation and the redistribution of income in favour of earners as opposed to *rentiers*, as Keynes used to call them.)

We turn now, then, to the vexed question of the role of public expenditure in achieving the elimination of poverty, and also some degree of egalitarianism. It is fairly commonly understood now that the pursuit of egalitarianism and the elimination of poverty are by no means the same thing, and it follows therefore that there may be a great deal to be said for substitution of the elimination of poverty as a direct, immediate and attainable objective to the somewhat more elusive question of the achievement of some notional degree of equality. If there were to be poverty elimination as a prior objective, then some form of minimum-income guarantee must be established both in negotiating procedures (and particularly in the settlements achieved by public bodies), and also in the tax and benefits schemes which should be adopted as a substitute for the existing complex arrangements of the Department of Health and Social Security, and in particular of the Supplementary Benefits Commission.

Public expenditure has taken the form of a very complex series of developments of individual departments, most of it now involving elaborate cross-subsidisation arrangements which defy any attempt at rational analysis. What we have established is a bureaucratic empire which is steadily encroaching cancerously upon the rest of society and in particular upon the wealth-creating manufacturing sector of the economy. It is to the elimination of at least the worst aspects of this cancer that attention must be directed. The only way this can be done is by the establishment of extremely clear priorities as to the purposes and nature of public expenditure. They involve the eradication of substantial elements of the bureaucracy, the dismantling of whole departments and the radical restructuring of local government along the lines already proposed by Labour's Royal Commission. If this were to be done, it might well be that the effect would be the same as the visit of a stout party to a health farm; its health would be restored and the unnecessary pounds would disappear as though by magic, to be replaced by toned-up industrial muscles.

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Paul Murray

Indira's Democracy

'Indira is India and India is Indira' intoned the Congress Party president at the recent Chandigarh conference. Never has the party appeared so united. Each and every resolution was passed unanimously, and there were no dissenting voices. The veil of consensus succeeded in fooling even foreign delegates to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Delhi, where Mrs Gandhi addressed a session on the perils facing young democracies. Of 50 Indian delegates to the conference there was not one selected from the largest Opposition party.

There is some foundation in the never-enumerated 'Hundred Gains' of the Emergency. Businessmen who have had quota clearances held up for months have seen miraculous action. One Calcutta resident received nine monthly electricity bills a fortnight after the declaration: 'The dust is beginning to be shaken off the files.' The 'spirit of discipline' has created an 'idyllic year on the campuses' according to one official spokesman. Women can walk back at night without being molested, and the crime rate has fallen drastically. Food is no longer adulterated with sand. Kerosene and milk are likely to be pure: before, Bombay milk was said to be diluted seven times before reaching the consumer. Cement can be guaranteed to stick bricks together, an assumption that could not be made with confidence before the emergency. The best harvest in a decade, with falling agricultural prices, has been a boon to government popularity, although Mrs Gandhi's personal responsibility for the monsoon might be doubted by those unaware of her equation with the goddess-destroyer of evil, Kali, among the 70-per-cent illiterate Indian population.

But a good monsoon is historically unrepeatable, which accounts for Delhi's buying of wheat on the international market to build up buffer stocks in what could well be an election year. The monolithic calm is illusory in other ways. Big bureaucratic decisions are becoming more difficult to take, as the punishment for failure grows more severe. The police, with more power, are more corrupt. Where a bribe was 20 or 30 rupees, small offenders today are paying 100 or 150 rupees to have charges dropped (18 rupees to the £1). The station-master of a large northern railway junction explained to me that the usual practice is to pay one's superior in cash or kind for the maintenance of job security in a country where under- and un-employment are the rule. The new powers of arbitrary dismissal and premature retirement in government service have increased insecurity, and correspondingly the bribes.

Uncontroversial manifesto regulars have been revamped as the 'Prime Minister's 20-Point Programme'. But despite a growth in the bureaucracy by 3.4 per cent this year, there is no apparatus for implementing the much-mouthed radical reforms. Land redistribution is vital to the success of India's self-sufficiency in agriculture, yet at the last count only 137,000 acres had been given to the landless harijans since June. The 'abolition' of bonded labour remains a mirage while alternative sources of rural credit are unavailable to the debtors. Nor can headway be made in the countryside, where over 80 per cent of India's 595 millions live, until there is a political organisation of the peasants which can break the veto that the gentry and kulaks exercise in Congress. This is the real contradiction of Mrs Gandhi's 'socialism': her party lives like a saprophyte on the rural system it is committed to destroy.

There are ominous signs that the party is moving towards a more ruthless attack on the other side of the problem. After a two-year decline in central government expenditure on voluntary family-planning programmes, Haryana state has demanded an undertaking from civil servants that they will restrict themselves to two children. Union ministers, too, have been making noises about possible compulsory birth control throughout India if 'restraint is not shown'. Even with the enormity of the present problem (India's population grows by 13 millions a year – about that of Australia) what would be the political conditions necessary before implementation of a compulsory sterilisation programme?

The voluntary disclosure scheme, which the Government claims has made inroads into the vast unofficial economy to the extent of revealing 15,400 million rupees of undeclared income and wealth, would be a substantial contribution to bringing the economy under control. Yet one tax official I spoke to said that in reality the figure is much less, as Rs8,000m. have been declared as wealth, being counted several times by inclusion of all the years that the wealth went undiscovered.

Inflation has slowed in the industrial sector. The Government claims a 5-6 per cent increase in production. My impression in Calcutta, Bombay and Ahmedabad, major industrial centres, was that inventories were being built up and India's economy was still heading to the bottom of a recession. The bonus payments on which most workers rely to pay off indebtedness have been cut as part of the anti-inflation policy, and in some cases not paid at all. Yet all Indian labour's methods of protest (strikes, go-slows and *gheraos* – the literal siege of bosses) have been often brutally curtailed. Workloads, hours and lay-offs have increased. Trade union leaders have been arrested, effectively immobilising the socialist and non-Soviet Communist Party of India (Marxist) unions.

Civil liberties, for those who enjoyed them, have suffered a probably mortal assault. A university dean told me that in Delhi alone 600 university teachers have been moved to 'whereabouts unknown'. Ac-

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cording to one diplomat who has been keeping a running total of arrests under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act and the Defence of India Rules, 13,000 have been held in Madhya Pradesh since 26 June. The CPI (M) know of 850 detentions of their members solely in the small southern state of Kerala. Upwards of 30 MPs have been picked up, including three leaders of Mrs Gandhi's own party who were known to be opposed to her rule. The All-India total of arrests without trial cannot be under 70,000, and many allege 100,000 plus. This includes small-time hustlers, smugglers, pimps and other 'anti-social elements', but on my totals it is unlikely that there have been fewer than 50,000 purely political prisoners, some of whom have been released.

Apart from many small opposition papers closing, larger ones have been harassed into an unmitigated provincialism and political sycophancy. The Delhi and Calcutta *Statesman*, too large and prestigious to close down, has had editions held up until after the other papers have been distributed. Most journalists I spoke to alleged that government and public corporation advertising has been withheld from insufficiently pliable publications. New (permanent) presidential ordinances prohibit 'defamation' of, or 'objectionable matter' concerning, the President, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Prime Minister and other dignitaries. The present censorship guidelines bar even foreign correspondents from reporting parliamentary proceedings.

Pressure on Press

V. C. Shukla, the Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, called all Indians working for the foreign press to his office immediately after the declaration of emergency and unequivocally declared that 'I am not reflecting cheap slogans when I say that all Western media are anti-Indian; I therefore appeal to your caution and patriotism that the burden of your copy should not reflect the style or views of your principals'. He closed with 'We will assess your work by the files we have on you, together with those at the Home Ministry. It will not be a judicial decision but a subjective one'. Apart from crude intimidation, Mr Shukla has recently produced plans for 'restructuring the press' to make it 'accountable and answerable to the people'. These include the amalgamation of the Indian news agencies, abolition of the Press Council, and the takeover of Goenka's *Indian Express* – the largest news chain – by the pro-Government oligopolist K. K. Birla. Other powers have been misused by the Government, chiefly in destroying Opposition organisations and the trade unions by removing their middle-ranking leadership.

The real crisis of the Opposition is their lack of an effective tactic to confront the ruthlessness of the emerging police state. Jayaprakash Narayan's People's Struggle Committee has organised *satyagraha*, but it is of very limited impact and is costly in detentions. Nor is publicity forthcoming. Many Gandhians in Narayan's movement had assumed that passive resistance would be as effective a weapon against the present regime as it had been against the British, but Opposition leaders now point out that never was the press so severely muzzled or people imprisoned without announcement of their names, place of, or reasons for, detention. The upshot is that there is now little opposition activity. J. P. Narayan was released only to be confined in a Bombay hospital, and his effective demise has opened a void in the national Opposition leadership. Severe restrictions on the rights of assembly everywhere, except the oasis of Opposition-ruled Gujarat, create communications problems. If the Opposition could raise money, it could not spend it, being denied access to printing presses, the media and public meetings. The Dravidian Welfare Association (DMK), who have ruled the only other opposition state, Tamil Nadu, for nine years, were dismissed by presidential fiat on 31 January. Leading members have been arrested, but supporters of Mrs Gandhi fear that she has overreached herself. There is little Congress Party organisation in the province, and the independent-minded Tamils will not enjoy the imposition of government decrees by Hindi-speaking Central Reserve Police.

Subservient Judiciary

Not only the Opposition are stumbling about in the dark. The creation of a closed political system has altered the Prime Minister's situation and options. She has no way of measuring public opinion. One shopkeeper eulogised Mrs Gandhi to me, then whispered: 'When people talk loudly they don't always mean what they say.' The Gujarat rural *panchayat* results were not as favourable to Congress as had initially been thought, and the massive defeats in the towns must have seriously worried the Congress leadership about the wisdom of an immediate election, despite their ossifying advantages. Although the Lok Sabha's term runs out in March, it is to be extended for the first time since independence. Mrs Gandhi will use her windfall two-thirds majority (won in 1971 with only 43 per cent of the popular vote) to push through any constitutional amendments.

One deliberately leaked document which has been in wide circulation proposes broad changes to scrap the present British system of parliamentary sovereignty and institute a directly elected President, French-style. Though radical, this is not new. What is more serious in the scheme is the subservience of the judiciary to the executive, through a new 'Superior Council of the Judiciary' packed with political appointees, and having powers to hire and fire judges, and to validate and interpret laws passed by the legislature. Articles 13, 19, 32, 226 and 331 could also be amended or deleted, severely circumscribing legal rights (in non-emergency times) such as freedom of association, right of appeal by government employees to the courts for redress of grievances, the right to file writs and petitions challenging the executive before the High Courts, and the rights to move to the Supreme Court for the enforcement of 'fundamental rights'. It is unlikely that Mrs Gandhi actually intends to implement all the proposals, but she will hold out for supremacy of the executive. As one Bombay lawyer put it: 'She's already bashed the executive and the legislature; she only needs to thump the judiciary now.'

According to the Bharathi case (and the recent assurances of Congress leaders) the 'basic structure' of the constitution is not to be altered. But what is the 'basic structure?' Few doubt that Mrs Gandhi will succeed in changing the law to suit her needs. She has herself ruled out turning the present Lok Sabha into a constituent assembly, but her cavalier attitude to the constitution since the emergency has been vindicated. The present Supreme Court justices (with at least two pending vacancies to be filled by her) are regarded as loyal.

These prospective changes would be only a formalisation of what has already happened – a shedding of any skin-deep (specifically British) attitudes to civil rights, press freedom and parliamentary democracy. Whether Mrs Gandhi's new power is used less adventitiously than before remains to be seen. But there is no shortage of well-informed Indians who see the new 'Ordinance Raj', perhaps over-glibly, as an attempt to save and secure the Nehru dynasty. Sanjay, Mrs Gandhi's 30-year-old younger son, is claimed to wield increasing power in Delhi, and, in a climate that has devalued politicians, is probably second only to Indira in fame. He has been drawn closer to his mother by her well-testified distrust of political advisers, sits in the 'kitchen cabinet', travels with her, and is said to have an office in the Prime Minister's secretariat. His only official position is as National Council member of the Youth Congress, but he has already established himself as the most powerful force in that organisation. Sanjay has declared himself uninhibitedly right-wing (in an interview which was published and hurriedly withdrawn) and has useful contacts with big business when legitimating elections are exceptionally expensive.

Socialism Dropped

Mrs Gandhi's socialism seems to have withered on the branch. The word was not in evidence during the proceedings at Chandigarh, and her four-day tirade against the Americans can be interpreted as compensation to her nominal allies, the Communist Party, for reiterating the pledge to abandon further nationalisation. Although trivial (as only 3 per cent of the working population are caught in the tax net) it is indicative that the lower limit for income tax has been raised to Rs8,000 a year, and industrialists are enjoying a new 'licence holiday'. No attempt has been made to curb the fast-growing luxury goods sector, a primary requirement if the rate of capital formation is to be boosted. The new political catchphrase is not 'socialism', 'socialistic society', nor even '*Garibi Hatao!*' (abolish poverty), but the thinned gruel of the 'welfare society'. Nor has New Delhi's political elite shown itself any more willing to reform its own nature or that of its support. The gap between radical words and fumbling deeds which yawned open last year to create Narayan's agitation has not yet been closed, and there are no signs that it will be. Where it cannot be filled by an ever more trenchant populism, it is being filled by repression.

New Delhi

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The Oil Rush – 4

Mervyn Jones

Edge of the Kingdom

The Shetland Isles are the last frontier of the oil boom, unless and until it veers round to the Outer Hebrides. Some of the richest oilfields lie in these northerly latitudes, and the oil will be brought to the Shetlands in at least two pipelines, perhaps ultimately six. There it will be trans-shipped or possibly refined, though the building of a refinery is far from a certainty. Anyway, if the boom comes up to expectations, the amount of oil 'belonging' to the Shetlands in the 1980s may equal the amount produced in Kuwait. As there are only 19,000 Shetlanders, whereas Kuwait has a population of 750,000, the sheikhdom would be handsomely surpassed in income per capita. It would not astonish me to see the Shetlands set up as an independent state; Mr Jo Grimond, the permanent MP since 1950, would make an admirable president.

A hundred and twenty miles of sea, with the Orkneys and Fair Isle in between, divide the Shetlands from the nearest point on the Scottish mainland. The largest island, confusingly known as Mainland, is 72 miles long but in most places only half a dozen miles across. There are 50 other islands, or 70 or 100 – it depends on whom you ask, and on the distinction between an island and a rock. Shetlanders don't like their islands to be regarded as a part of Scotland. The Scottish National Party managed to get 17 per cent of the vote in the last election for the Orkney and Shetland constituency – mainly in the Orkneys, Shetlanders declare – but majority feeling is not moving in this direction; most Shetlanders say that they would rather deal with Englishmen, Norwegians or Americans, or for that matter practically anybody, than with 'mainland' Scots. With devolution in the air, the Shetland council has passed a resolution laying down that 'in the event of constitutional change our links should be with Westminster rather than Edinburgh'.

Coming by air from Aberdeen, you land at Sumburgh, on the southerly tip of the main island, and find that you are 26 miles from Lerwick, the only town. (Lerwick is therefore farther from its airport than London, Paris or New York.) The road is narrow and winding, and was first signposted as A970 only a few years ago; before that, Shetlanders didn't bother about A and B roads. Cars are outnumbered by taxis, which have quadrupled since 'the oil' came and do a roaring trade. Shetlanders don't usually travel far from their homes, and travellers between Sumburgh and Lerwick are mostly connected with 'the oil'; they are here for anything between a day and a few months and are unlikely to have imported their cars. A drive-on-drive-off ferry is planned but is not yet in existence.

It is, of course, light nearly all the time in summer and dark nearly all the time in winter. The predominant colour of sky and sea is grey. The predominant atmosphere is damp and chilly. The fine summer of 1975, when it was possible to sit out of doors without a coat, was a rare experience for Shetlanders. The last time this had happened was in 1947, an old lady told me with precision.

The drive to Lerwick gives you a fair idea of Shetland scenery, though it doesn't take you to the more remote spots. Between one rocky coast and the other, there is practically no level ground. The hills are not very high, but you have the feeling of travelling among formidable mountains. Very little of the land is cultivated; you see tiny hayfields and vegetable plots in a few sheltered corners, but most of the scattered crofts depend on sheep-farming – Shetlanders don't live in villages, except round fishing harbours. There are no trees, no hedges, no gorse or bracken or heather, only turf broken here and there by grey boulders, so that – unless you've been this far north before – your associations are with the highest ranges of, for instance, the Alps. The rare trees of the Shetlands have been deliberately planted and are notable landmarks; 'I'll meet you at the tree' is a traditional joke. One's thoughts tend naturally to what it would be like to be lost in the hills, especially when they're mysteriously shrouded in drizzling rain or swirling mist, as they are most of the time.

Lerwick has a population of 6,000 and two main streets. These streets are criss-crossed by narrow alleys and by little streets with steps, so Lerwick is decidedly picturesque. Clambering up the steps to get a view of the harbour and the cliffs beyond, on an August morning when the sun made a brief appearance, I made comparisons with coastal towns in Wales and Cornwall, even in the Mediterranean. The reflection induced thoughts of souvenir shops, craft shops, antique shops, ice-cream and sandwich shops, tea-shops, pubs and bars with awnings – hopefully, good sea-food restaurants. But Lerwick has none of these, any more than it has ten-storey hotels with balconies, or camping and caravan sites, or two-hour trips round the bay. Despite its charm and character (or, perhaps, to retain its charm and character) Lerwick has virtually no tourists. This comment from me amazed a resident, who said: 'But this year we're simply overrun with tourists.' Spending the day in and around the town on foot, I counted six. (They were easily identified by their air of bewilderment and their hand-knitted Shetland sweaters.) There is one restaurant, which had just opened.

It isn't easy to get to the Shetlands, since the boats run only twice a week and the air services are frequently halted by fogs. And it has been rendered more difficult, paradoxically, by the oil boom. Seats on the planes are heavily booked by oil companies, drilling companies and construction companies (these seats, of course, are not always used). When I tried, on a Thursday, to get an interview with the chief executive of the Shetland council, I was told: 'He's been trying to get back from the mainland since Monday.' Since the little airport also has to deal with rig-workers travelling in charter planes, or desperately trying to get home after being landed from the rigs by helicopter, it has the atmosphere of a refugee camp. The oil companies also book almost all the hotel rooms and pay for them whether they're needed or not. Even the youth hostel, I gathered, is booked up months in advance.

'Happy is the land that has no history,' said Brecht, and the Shetlands haven't had much. The events mainly recalled are visitations by strangers from the world to the south: that is, the two world wars when the strangers were in navy or air force uniform and, on a more startling scale, the oil rush. However, the Shetlands have not been entirely happy. It has always been difficult to make a living, and for decades young men have left the islands to seek work in Scotland or England, or have emigrated (generally to Canada), or have joined the Merchant Marine.

'The oil', in fact, is something of a rescue operation for the Shetlands. The two traditional mainstays of the economy – fishing and hand-knitted wool – are both in a critical state. Fishing is doing badly everywhere, and the knitters have for some reason lost important export markets.

The new prosperity is still in its early stages, because the oil strikes off the Shetlands were made later than those off Aberdeen. Rumours and hopes came quicker than realities. One Shetlander said to me: 'It's not happening the way we expected in 1972. It's all *mañana*, really. We're beginning to ask, when does the boom begin? There's politics involved, don't you think so?' There's also a suspicion that when the boom does start it will be short-lived, because most of the jobs will be on construction projects. Sullum Voe, a sheltered inlet towards the nortern end of the main island (the word 'voe' is cognate with 'fjord'), has been chosen as the terminal for the pipelines, and construction here will provide 1,200 jobs when it's at its peak – when we were in the Shetlands, it had just got under way. Two service bases, supplying material to the rigs and to the pipe-laying barges, have been created near Lerwick; harbour improvements at Lerwick, and the drive-on ferry for cars and lorries, are other important projects; and the air-

This is the fourth and final extract from The Oil Rush *by Mervyn Jones, with photographs by Fay Godwin, to be published by Quartet Books on 24 June at £1.95.*

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port runway at Sumburgh is being extended. But some of the work, especially at remote Sullum Voe, will be done by men brought from the mainland by contractors and living in camps.

However, there ought to be a substantial number of permanent jobs, in proportion to the small population of the Shetlands. The Lerwick bases have brought 80 jobs so far. Sullom Voe will offer at least a 100, and many more if a refinery is built there. There are jobs at the airport, jobs in hotels now busy all year round, jobs driving taxis, and above all jobs building houses. The council has built 1,200 houses within the last three years, but there's still a two-year waiting list and more will be needed. Wages are not tremendous when compared with those being earned in other parts of the oil scene, but a service-base job with overtime can bring in £80.

As well as this, the new industry has been of benefit to small businesses – to light-engineering workshops, to garages, to transport contractors. The big companies can't bring their equipment or their repair services to these islands so easily as to a mainland town, so they make deals with local firms, even with local mechanics and drivers working as self-employed freelances. It's not unusual for a Shetlander, who not long ago had only his croft to give him a livelihood, to invest in a bulldozer and hire it by the day – perhaps driving it himself – to a construction project. So money is finding its way to homes all over the islands. One of the banks has increased its staff from 12 to 26, mainly to meet the need for mobile units visiting remote places one day a week. And there alone, by the way, are 14 new jobs.

The Determined Council

But the wealth of the Shetlands, as a community, has been increased principally thanks to the determined policies of the council. At the outset of the boom, a development company managed to buy land at Sandwick, halfway between Sumburgh and Lerwick, and get a service base built before any had noticed. The chief executive felt that such things mustn't happen again, especially as Sandwick wasn't a place where development was considered suitable. Asking around, councillors discovered that developers and land speculators were buying land from innocent crofters all over the Shetlands.

One company had already got a firm grip on Sullum Voe, the proposed site of the pipeline terminals. There was a menacing prospect of development in all the wrong places: places where there was no housing and the council would be obliged to provide it, places where nobody needed work, places of great natural beauty, places where the wild life had to be protected. The Shetlands can boast of several kinds of rare birds, such as the snowy owl, and also rare plants. But the ecological balance is delicate, and rough handling could irrevocably destroy it.

The Shetlands had never had, nor seemed to need, a planning department, but clearly it was high time to set one up, and it came into existence – with a devoted staff of three – in September 1973. The first necessity was to save Sullum Voe, and this was done by stalling on planning permission until the development company saw that it wouldn't get a free hand. Eventually the council acquired the land there, partly by compulsory purchase. The land around the airport was acquired, too, and the coastal land in and near Lerwick belongs to the Harbour Trust, a public body, so all the nerve-centres of the oil boom are now in the control of the community.

The ground rents charged to base operators and developers are pretty steep, and it seems that the Arabs have nothing on the Shetlanders when it comes to ensuring that the money from oil stays where it's made. The increased 'national income' is to be spent on the needs of the community – for instance, on a sports centre for Lerwick, which at present has very scanty facilities for leisure and recreation. The council also intends to keep life relatively cheap for the islanders. Because of transport costs, a council house that could be built on the mainland for £13,000 demands £20,000 in the Shetlands. Nevertheless, rents and rates are the lowest in the United Kingdom. A three-bedroom house is rented for £132 a year, plus £30 rates.

Restraining the Pace

Planning also means that development will be limited to three areas – Sullum Voe, Lerwick and Sumburgh – leaving the rest of the Shetlands to the crofters and the snowy owls. Local plans have been commissioned from major consultants such as Llewellyn Davies. The guiding idea is that the coming changes should be less than a total transformation. At Sullum Voe, where there are four small villages, the planners considered the creation of a new town, but decided to enlarge the villages and preserve their distinct identities.

Significantly – and in this respect following the Norwegian strategy – the Shetland planners want to restrain the pace of the oil rush. Mrs Spence, the assistant planning officer, told me: 'We've slowed things down to give the community time to adjust.' There has been pressure for bigger service bases with more berths – not from the oil companies, it seems, but from the base operators. But the number of berths has been firmly limited to 27. What, I asked, would be the results of allowing bigger bases? 'The population would grow too fast,' Mrs Spence replied, 'there would be too much traffic, too much pressure on service industries, and all kinds of social problems.' The principle is: first the sports centre – and, I hope, the coffee-bars and restaurants – and then the population increase. As for allowing a refinery at Sullum Voe, the planners feel that this would be altogether too much. They will oppose it strongly, both on social and ecological grounds.

This attitude, it seemed to me, was an intelligent response to the mixed feelings of Shetlanders about the oil boom. For it was here, more than anywhere, that I was aware of doubts going beyond the universal doubts about whether it's going to last. As usual, the division of opinion is broadly political. People of conservative outlook (with a small 'c', as they're mostly Liberal voters) are the most regretful. Labour supporters, and working-class people in general, naturally think first and foremost of jobs and wages. Alex Morrison, a veteran Labour councillor, said to me emphatically: 'If it weren't for the oil we'd be in the depths, in a worse plight than before the war. We've got full employment, our men who were forced to leave their homes have come back, there's a new spirit about – why shouldn't we be glad?'

What Alex Morrison says is true, and my guess is that most Shetlanders would take the same attitude, like most people in Aberdeen and Peterhead. And yet, when I speak of mixed feeling, I think not simply of a clash of opinion, but of feelings mixed within the same individual mind. The wave of the future appears, in a community unused to change, too powerful, perhaps too overwhelming, to be welcomed without some qualms. An elderly woman – a native of Edinburgh who has lived happily in the Shetlands for 40 years – pursed her lips judiciously when I asked what she thought about the oil boom and replied: 'It's good for Shetland but bad for the life of Shetland.' At a glance, the statement seems confused or even absurd. It expresses, all the same, an honest hesitation between clear material benefit and less tangible loss.

Sense of Difference

There is something, I soon gathered, called 'the Shetland way of life'. I heard people use the phrase ironically but affectionately, as though repeating a family joke. It may be a product of romantic nostalgia; it may be, and I suppose it is, employed by the satisfied to deny the aspirations of those in greater need. Nevertheless it contains, I suspect, a reality. If I am guessing right, it means a habit of self-reliance, a desire to control the shape and scale of life, an agreed view of what is and what is no fitting, and a sense of being different from other people. Many Shetlanders have a vague, and some a sharp, awareness that these values are under threat.

The elderly woman also said: 'You used to know everybody you met, but now you see people and wonder who they might be.' A younger woman said: 'People here never used to lock their cars, you know, but now they do. There's no doubt the crime rate has risen.' (From very low to rather less low, but all the same it has risen.) And a middle-aged man: 'They're asking people to work 14 hours a day. What pleasure is there in that? Our folk won't do it for long.'

This Scotland

☐ Glasgow police wrote to a prisoner in Peterhead asking him to collect a starting pistol which they had confiscated while he was serving a two-year jail sentence, it was claimed yesterday in the High Court in Edinburgh. On the day of his release the man did so and just over three weeks later used the pistol in an assault and robbery on a shop in Baillieston, Lanarkshire. – *Glasgow Herald* (Isobel Henderson).

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London Diary

☐ Are we all in danger of over-reacting to the affair of the British mercenaries in Angola? I ask the question partly because I am sick and tired of the press romanticisation of the so-called 'Callan'. Who called him that in the first place – and, if his real name is Costas Georgiou, why can't he be so described? Or did the newspapers simply want to create a native-bred rival to 'Carlos' – about whom I also had more than my fill last weekend? When I first heard the unconfirmed reports of the massacre on the radio on Sunday night, my initial reaction was, I fear, a cynical one: that, for once, the Special Branch might have done something rather skilful. Having grown bored with playing hide-and-seek in the lanes around Gatwick, had someone perhaps had the bright idea of trotting out a vintage piece of 'black' propaganda? Alas, the original American NBC story soon proved to be all too accurate. Of course I don't quarrel at all with the sense of horror it produced: merely at the mood of vicarious excitement ('He was a very hard man – athletic and handsome') it also seems to have engendered. To cast an alleged mass murderer as a kind of Beau Geste seems to me to do no service to anyone. Nor, for that matter, did I ever see the need for all the preliminary publicity about the mercenaries. If the Foreign Office can't stop British citizens going abroad to kill for money, why should the rest of us allow the impression to be given that we are so totally fascinated by them?

☐ To be fair, though, the Foreign Enlistment Act of 1870 has never been much good at discouraging British subjects who want to fight in foreign wars. It was, in effect, stillborn because it dates from the time when formal declarations of war were becoming unfashionable. It penalises British subjects, anywhere in the Queen's dominions, who accept an engagement in the military or naval service of any foreign state at war with one of our friends. This rules out civil wars anywhere until one side wins. What might give the 1870 Act a little more chance of coming to life is the relative alacrity with which modern states accord official recognition to usurping governments. 'Foreign state,' it says, includes 'any person exercising or assuming to exercise the power of government in any foreign country, province or part of a province.' So an act of recognition could transform a legally scatheless mercenary into a wanted criminal. I suspect that Lord Diplock and his colleagues will recommend changes in the 1870 Act, possibly its repeal. What I don't see, since this is not a country where we have to stay at home and like it, is how you actually stop British citizens going abroad, with motives either undeclared or falsely stated.

☐ Perhaps the most interesting decision lately taken in a magistrate's court was handed down this week by a woman – the decisively handsome Mrs Audrey Frisby. During the latest blue movies case, she ruled that obscenity was the test, not ownership or publication. The NS holds no brief for such films, but the defendant in this case had been tried on two previous occasions for 'conspiring to publish obscene matter' – in Birmingham in the autumn of 1974. The first jury failed to agree; the second time round, he was acquitted. The films under discussion this week were precisely the same ones, so two points remain at issue. Was the second jury 'right' in failing to find them obscene? And was the effect of this particular summons, for 'possessing obscene articles for gain', to put the defendant, Mr John Lindsay, in double jeopardy? What is not at issue is the merit of Mrs Frisby's firm ruling that the DPP was precluded from bringing any fresh prosecution by the earlier two trials. Predictably, the DPP is now appealing to the Divisional Court. I hope Queen's Bench judges show themselves as sensitive as Mrs Frisby to one of the oldest principles of English law.

☐ I certainly feel a good deal happier about her than I do about Mr Justice Ackner, who said at Winchester Crown Court on Monday, that he wanted to 'make it abundantly clear . . . to the criminal fraternity that the courts grant a discount to those who show contrition, to those who recognise their guilt'. True, he was trying a rape case – and the arguments against forcing the victims of rape to go through a second ordeal in the witness box are real ones. But, promulgated in the general form that it was, the judge's statement still seems to me to add up to dangerous doctrine. It doesn't, I would have thought, take any great effort of imagination to see just how such words are bound to be exploited by bullying (or even wheedling) policemen in an effort to get 'confessions' out of bewildered and perhaps none too bright suspects long before their cases come to court.

☐ How much trouble are the weekend colour supplements in? There have been a number of reports lately about the losses they are now making and I've even heard it said that two of them went recently on a deputation to the third with a view to bringing about a collective closedown. The invitation to mutual *hara-kiri* apparently got nowhere and, since the newspaper business is a highly competitive one (in which individual papers often prefer to harm themselves rather than risk helping their rivals), that probably means we shall go on having a selection of three colour magazines to choose from for some time yet. As a journalist I'm all in favour of that: but an article by Harry Henry in last month's *Admap* would certainly give me nightmares if I worked in the accounts department of any of the three papers concerned. Mr Henry, a former deputy managing director of the Thomson Organisation, sees the gradual erosion of the 'premium advertising rate' – by which advertisers were initially persuaded or cajoled into paying substantially more per 1,000 readers in the colour supplements than they ever did in the ordinary mass-circulation weeklies – as being bound eventually to sound the death knell for this particular piece of journalistic enterprise (first launched in Britain by the *Sunday Times* less than 14 years ago). At that time, says Mr Henry, the *Sunday Times* could at least console itself that its initial losses were simply 'an investment . . . bound to pay off in due course': in 1976, by contrast, his view is that all three papers are simply pouring 'money down a bottomless drain'.

☐ It is nearly 21 years since the NS last published a readers' questionnaire – and the one facing this page follows fairly faithfully in the steps of its predecessor. That is to say it does not belong at all in the world of those determined young ladies with clip-boards who accost one in the street and ask earnest questions about everything from washing machines to instant coffee. What *we're* interested in is our readers' views on the paper not their purchasing habits in the field of consumer durables. So I hope no one (not even those, like me, who normally give a pretty wide berth to all market research investigators) will feel shy or inhibited in responding to the page and a half of questions that appear opposite and overleaf. I remember Dick Crossman writing in one of his last London Diaries that he thought there should be some way of organising a 'readers' collective' for the NS so that those who financially supported the paper (and our readers still do that in a ratio of three-to-one as against our advertisers) should be able to have at least some influence on its character and content. That's exactly what our questionnaire this week is designed to achieve. It's simple to cut or tear out, for readers at home it only needs to be folded and put in a post box and here in the UK we're also paying the postage – as we did, a good deal less expensively, in 1955. And if you want to know what else has changed in 21 years how about the NS's idea then of an income beyond the dreams of avarice being one of 'over £2,000 p.a.'?

Crucifer

This England

Prizes: £1.50 book token for first entry, £1 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ Three men chased a 'mugger' into East Putney station, London, after he punched and kicked an elderly woman, but were turned back at the barrier because they had no tickets, it was stated at the Central Criminal Court yesterday. – *The Times* (R. H. Wildman)

☐ Reviews in brief. Margaret Haswell – *The Nature of Poverty* (Macmillan £10). – *New Society* (Chas White)

☐ Missing from Morning Service at St. Aldate's on Sunday was the second collect which includes the phrase: 'thou art the author of peace and lover of concord . . . ' It was omitted in deference to anti-Concorde campaigner the Bishop of Kingston, the Rt Rev. Hugh Montefiore, who was preaching on 'Ecology – the Rape of the Earth.' – *Oxford Journal* (A. C. Hendrie)

☐ 5.35 London and South East only: *Tom and Jerry*. All other English regions: *Regional News*. – *Radio Times* (Brenda Stevenson)

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Readers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been prepared in the hope that a substantial number of our readers will give us some information about who they are and what they like. If for any reason you prefer not to answer a question, just leave it blank. Similarly, if you prefer not to add your name and address, we would rather have your information anonymously than not at all.

This double sheet is unnumbered and you can therefore cut it out without spoiling your paper. Simply fold and tuck where indicated. The address is already printed, and no stamp is necessary if posted in Britain. Readers overseas should use an envelope.

PLEASE WRITE YOUR ANSWER UNDER EACH QUESTION
OR RING APPROPRIATE REPLY

1. Do you read the New Statesman every week?

2. If not, how many issues have you read during the past four weeks?

3. Do you (a) buy it yourself?

   (b) see it in library/common room/office?

4. If you buy the paper yourself, how many people usually see your copy?

5. How long have you been a reader?

6. Why did you first become a reader?

7. What are your favourite features or contributors?

   (a)

   (b)

   (c)

   (d)

   (e)

   (f)

8. What features or contributors could you do without?

9. What new features would you suggest?

10. Do you read the paper mainly for

    (a) the front half? (b) the back half?

11. About yourself:

    Male/Female Married/Single

    Age group:

    Teens/Twenties/Thirties/Forties/Fifties/60+

12. What is your profession or occupation?

13. Your income group?

    under £2,000/£2,000–£3,500/£3,500–£5,000/£5,000–£10,000/over £10,000

14. Where do you live (town, region or, if overseas, country)?

15. Did you follow a course of further education? If so, at what college, polytechnic or university, and when did you complete the course?

Continued overleaf

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16. Or are you a student engaged in further education?

17. Do you hold any office such as MP, JP or councillor? Are you an official of a trade union, political party or voluntary organisation? If so, which?

18. Are you a member of a trade union? If so, which?

19. Do you support any political party? If so, which?

20. Which other papers do you read?

    (a) daily

    (b) Sunday

    (c) weekly

Any comments or criticisms of the New Statesman which you would like to make:

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Anne Bennett

Cash Value

'Don't let it shatter your image, Arthur,' I said. He had just told me how, while he was tending an ailing pot plant in our office corridor, a client had strayed from the waiting-room and plaintively asked him where she could find a social worker. She had responded to Arthur's offer of help by apologising and saying that she had thought he was the gardener.

So, seeking to do better than Arthur, I had a coffee and thought I had better go out. Then a teenage delinquent of mine, who should have been in a community home 60 miles away, turned up, claiming that he had followed *my* advice to use his intelligence. He reasoned that if he behaved himself in the community home in which by dint of sweat, tears and special pleading I had finally managed to find him a place, then logically I would leave him there for the next few years or until he reached school-leaving age. I could not deny it.

'Right,' he said, 'Now I do not like it there, and I've decided to abscond every time you send me back. So you may as well let me stay at home.'

'Look Dave,' I said, 'We have been into all this before. When I let you stay home you pinch things and never go to school.'

'Ah, but,' he said, 'I've turned over a new leaf. My stepfather's gone off and it's better at home now. I'm needed there to be head of the household. You don't trust me, that's the trouble. It's a fine thing when your own welfare officer doesn't trust you. Can't I have a different officer?' 'No you can't,' I snarled at him, 'because no one else will take you on. So you are stuck with me.'

I rang his Mum, who confirmed what he had said. 'He's blackmailing me,' I wailed. 'Yes he is,' she said, 'and he means it. If you send him back he will just keep on running. Oh, come on' she pleaded, 'Let him have another chance. It's the New Year.'

I could get away with it, I thought, if I write it up as 'responding to the deep-felt needs of his family'. So I went back to David and took him round the neck and said: 'All right then, you little bugger, I'll let you go home. But if you so much as lay a finger on a car or anything that doesn't belong to you, I'll have you in the remand wing of a prison before you know where you are.' The little bugger replied: 'I like it in those places, I get on well with the screws.'

'All right then,' I said, 'I'll have you climbing Snowdon in bad weather as intermediate treatment. See how you like that.' And he left then, but returned and stuck his head round the door, saying: 'How about you buying me a new suit, I'm thinking of running a disco?' And I screamed 'Aaaaah' so loud that they looked in from reception to see if I was being mugged.

You see, only a few days ago we had a man in the waiting-room who exposed himself. But *his* social worker kept her cool and said that she imagined he was experiencing marital difficulties and would give him the address of the marriage guidance council. When she came back with it he'd gone. We found out afterwards that he'd done the same thing in several offices around the area; but as everyone had passed him on to different organisations, I presume the poor fellow had stopped doing it in the end, overcome by the sheer boredom of it all.

Eventually I *did* get out to find an old man of 80-plus whose sister had written to me saying she reckoned he needed a home help as she could do nothing for him, being as she lived 40 miles away and was herself 86. He lived what seemed to be miles from anywhere in a cottage incongruously next to a hangar containing a small aeroplane. Aeroplane and hangar sparkled with such cleanliness that I said to the old man that his landlord seemed more concerned with the state of his aeroplane than with the cottage. 'It's lovely to see that little plane take off,' he said apparently unconcerned about the state of his house. Then I told him why I had come; and he said old Lil always did like to stick her oar into other people's business, but he agreed he would like a home help.

I was jotting down facts like him being a widower and I asked if he had any children. Yes, he'd had a daughter, who was dead. We sat there in his poky little room. You could hardly swing a cat in it for the jumble of his possessions and he was telling me about it; and it was as if it was last week and not 50 years ago.

'We only had the one,' he said, 'going on seven she was, went to school in Abingdon, she did. She was coming out of school, running, not looking, like they do, you know, and a car knocked her down. A sports car it was. They took her to hospital in Oxford, fetched me out of work. Cycled there, I did. She was unconscious and I waited, never saw her alive again. She died ten past four in the morning. They did their best – the doctors – but they couldn't save her. That's her,' he said, fumbling about amid the clutter on the mantelpiece, and there she was, this little girl posing carefully on a tin scooter and grinning at the camera. It was 1925 and I wanted to rage at the irony of it – killed by a frivolous thing like a sports car. I pictured him having to cycle home in the dawn to tell his wife their girl was dead. A couple of months later the home help told me the old man had an infection and they had whipped him off to hospital. He died there.

His sister said would I see to the disposal of his things as the landlord wanted the house cleared? Eventually I went out there with one of those dealers who advertise in local papers – 'Furniture bought and sold, houses cleared.' 'You never know what you'll find in these houses,' he said as he fished out from the kitchen larder a filthy old white enamel bread bin with BREAD written boldly on it and which, when cleaned up, would look as if it came from Habitat. As we went through the oddments on the mantelpiece I picked up the little girl's photograph. 'Not a bad frame,' he said, 'might fetch a pound or two.' Finally he announced: '£65 the lot.' Not much for 80 years' living, I thought.

Devastation in Guatemala. How you can help.

Last Sunday on TV an appeal went out for immediate aid to the victims of the earthquakes which have devastated Guatemala and neighbouring countries.

Whole cities, towns and villages have been wiped out. 40,000 are injured, at least 200,000 are homeless.

Stricken areas are critically short of medical aid, shelter, food and water. And there is the threat of a typhoid epidemic.

The Disasters Emergency Committee needs money urgently to help in relief and redevelopment work.

Please send any money you can afford today to:

Guatemala Earthquake Appeal
Room 26 P.O. Box 999
London EC3 2AA

or through any bank or Post Office Giro, quoting account No. 5196000

DISASTERS EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

The Disasters Emergency Committee comprises the British Red Cross Society, Christian Aid/CAFOD, Oxfam, the Save the Children Fund. War on Want.

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

Be Off, Annan!

Tea-time has never been the same for me since Mrs Dale and her diary were untimely ripped from us by the BBC. Tea-bags and Parkwood Hill (I did not approve of the Dales' move to that new town, Exton, or of the diligent doctor's attempts to be more 'with it'), cup cakes and Gentlemen's Relish were made to go together and on Mary Dale's departure there can hardly have been any dry eyes in the whole of Tunbridge Wells. My own were as moist as they had been when Mrs Freeman's cat, Captain (34 at a rough estimate), passed across in long grass behind the potting-shed. Mrs Freeman, incidentally, mother to Mary and not wife of John.

The final episode, with everybody happy, formed the cosiest of leave-takings but I always hoped that Mrs Dale would go out on the crest of some great unresolved crisis or disaster. I don't mean somebody, her sister Sally perhaps, getting burnt in a fire – that special treat was reserved for the Archers. No. I just thought that Mrs Dale might possibly cook inadvertently for breakfast ('*Do* have this other kidney, Jim') some specimens which her husband had brought home the night before and which were awaiting analysis. 'Have you seen a glass jar anywhere about, Mary?' A startled gasp. 'Oh Jim, how dreadful! I *am* sorry . . .' Then those twanging harp strings and an eternity of silence. *Whose* kidneys? One would never know.

Who, one wonders, had the effrontery to remove this harmless pleasure and what further shocks are in store? Peers, life or otherwise, don't come any jollier than Lord Annan or more aware of what in life is valuable, worth while and, above all, *enjoyable*. One only hopes that he and his merry persons, selflessly sitting, probing, viewing, listening, evaluating, are not going to suggest basic alterations in what actually reaches the public – the programmes. The world contains no broadcasting service remotely comparable to the BBC (all right, go to America, Germany, France, switch on, tune in and find out). It would be criminal and lunatic to tamper basically with what it produces.

How it produces it, and what it costs to do so, is another matter and doubtless the sights of the Annan Committee are set on this and other loftier subjects (those bodies who wish for more control from outside, perhaps). Are they hell-bent, as well they should be, on reducing the number of highly-paid administrators (we know from wartime that there are no jobs that five people do that cannot be adequately done by three)? How amusing if we were, in time, to see a topless Aunty, with most of the available cash going to those who, after all, do the real, actual broadcasting work.

For example, when George Barnes, in many ways the epitome of all that is best in the BBC, and immensely agreeable and humorous with it, was appointed Director of the Spoken Word, whatever that may mean, I used to get quite worried about him as a friend. What on earth was George doing at 10.45? What at 3.15? Did he ever have time for lunch? Plotting the various stages of his directorial cross was quite a business. Did he finally sink exhausted into bed with a happy cry of 'How well I this day have directed the spoken word!', and would we in fact have noticed if he hadn't?

I have always been slightly suspicious of politicians ('Look at lovely me, I'm going to govern you and tell you what you can or cannot do') and clergymen ('I'm going to lead you to God'), and the essence of both these callings was present in John ('The Lord is my shepherd') Reith, guided, probably from Above, into embryo broadcasting in 1922 and eventually managing to create, in Broadcasting House, an atmosphere reminiscent of a particularly pi house in one of those public schools that adjoin a cathedral.

Surface holiness and rectitude were everywhere present and it was therefore with some surprise that I discovered that for my first broadcast, in 1934, the BBC had encouraged me, young, naïve and trusting as I was, to accept six guineas for a solo performance which had been estimated by them to be worth eight guineas. The details would bore but what I write is true. Such hanky-panky hardly seemed to 'go' with the building. To query the fee would have been to me as impossible as, in St Peter's, to complain to the Pope about the quality and vintage of the communion wine.

University dons too, their heads in the clouds, could be similarly tricked and were extremely poorly rewarded. And there was the famous occasion when an Oxford professor, whose script had been submitted and approved, was asked by the producer whether 12 guineas would be all right, and answered 'Well, that seems very reasonable. Would you like it by cheque or in cash?' There is something very strange about an organisation that could repeatedly query an expenses luncheon bill for 6s 6d from somebody who was bringing them great glory and prestige. This was the treatment meted out to Dorothy L. Sayers at the height of her powers and at the time of *The Man Born To Be King*, a series which took her three years to write and for which she was paid the princely sum of £600.

The fees paid to regular broadcasters (and I trust that Lord Annan is all ears) seldom allow them to retire and live in the South of France. Financial dealings with the BBC have been, on various occasions in the past, rum in the extreme. It seems odd that one should have been required to haggle vulgarly with a monopolistic, uncommercial, non-profit-making public body. I myself am widely known and rightly admired for the outstanding sunniness of my nature but even I have, on three separate occasions, had to lose my wool down the wires at the paltriness of the fees suggested. And the result? They telephoned within an hour increasing the fees by 72 per cent, 70 per cent and 120 per cent respectively. This surely means that the BBC was fully prepared for me to work for them for a sum which they well knew, for why else should they increase it, to be totally inadequate. Why? And I bet that most seasoned broadcasters have their own weird tales to tell. Compton Mackenzie, cackling loudly, used to be full of them.

But away with sad thoughts as we enjoy the huge benefits, though more for the ear than the eye, dispensed by the BBC. They have, over 50 years, amassed a vast treasure-chest of the best available recorded sound. They could live off their fat, and may indeed have to, for years. We owe a very great deal to Reith and his genius and his institution, in more ways than one. Don't forget that those who merely listen, and do not view, listen free. There's generosity for you.

Roger Woddis

Infallible Symptom

(After Isaac Watts)

'Corruption, the most infallible symptom of constitutional liberty.' – Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

How doth the busy Lockheed bee,
  Without the slightest qualm,
Bestow her generosity
  On every open palm!
How handsomely she spreads her wings!
  How neatly drops her grease
Alike on commoners and kings –
  Long may their bribes increase!

How universal was her flight!
  How wide her range and long
From Holland, where they do all right,
  To Turkey and Hong Kong!
Japan, Colombia, Italy –
  Her labour never ends;
Yet this was not depravity,
  For they were just good friends.

Corruption is considered small
  And lightly to be borne,
For Gibbon wrote *Decline and Fall*
  Before the age of porn.
Fat contracts go with fat cigars,
  Backhanders aren't obscene,
And we can thank our lucky stars
  Our hands (we hope) are clean.

Yet Lockheed finds some dropsy still
  For other hands to take
And calls it mercantile goodwill,
  The icing on the cake.
Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
  For nature makes them so;
If men make fortunes overnight,
  The rest of us are slow.

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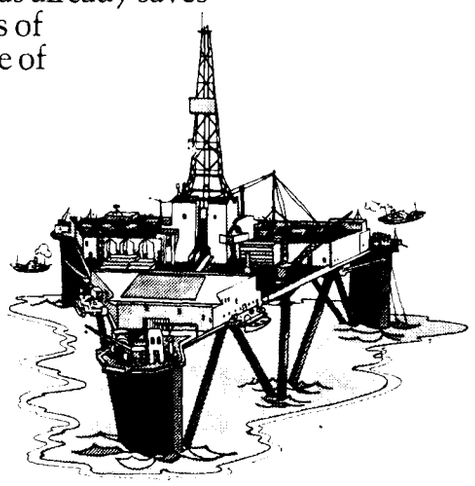
HERE TODAY, HERE TOMORROW... ...AND FOR A VERY LONG TIME TO COME.

The supplies of natural gas so far discovered (and which Britain has been enjoying for about eight years now) will last Britain for a very long time to come – at current rates of usage.

And, with the firm expectation of further significant finds in the North Sea and around other parts of the coast, Britain can look forward to enjoying the unique benefits of this clean, efficient fuel into the next century.

What is more, natural gas already saves Britain hundreds of millions of pounds a year on the balance of payments, and make us less dependent on imported oil.

All of which makes natural gas one of Britain's most precious assets. So please use it carefully – it's much too good to waste.



HOW YOU CAN SAVE GAS AND MONEY

1 Use your central heating time clock sensibly
2 Turn your thermostat down a degree or two
3 Turn off unnecessary radiators
4 Insulate your roof space and hot water system
5 Have your gas equipment properly maintained and serviced
6 Ask at your local showroom for further information about how to save gas–and save money

SAVE IT

BRITISH GAS

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Letters to the Editor

The Stately Owners of England

Sir, That you find our offence rank is clear from your front page last week but we are still not sure how we offend. Is it because we continue to encourage owners of historic buildings to bear most of the cost and trouble of keeping them open, attractive and accessible to those who want to visit them – rather than emptying them of life and human association as happens so often on mainland Europe? But let us be quite clear that our strictly controlled grants go to help maintain the fabric of the houses and not the families living in them. Is it 'carelessness' that we are not inclined to rush in and buy up Stonor Park at great public expense when the building is not at risk? Nobody so far wants to knock it down! Do you think we should never agree to the partial demolition of an historic house in order to give it some chance of a viable future?

I find your argument confusing, and even when you seem to deal in fact you get it wrong. We are currently spending £3¼m. a year in England – *not* £1½m. – and the amount has increased annually since 1972. Incidentally, what else would you do with the Grange if not to make it safe and accessible to the public?

It is odd to see in a socialist paper the idea that the Government should buy up the freeholds of all 250,000 listed buildings. Have you worked out what this would cost at even an unrealistically low £10,000 per freehold? And how would you recruit and pay (let alone make acceptable) the army of extra civil servants and others needed to maintain and run the buildings?

Alas, we are never likely to be able to spend as much as I should like on our architectural heritage, and mistakes have been made and may still be made in an area where taste is fickle; but I don't think we are doing too badly in our current difficulties. Neither the tone of your article nor its proposals – if I have got them right – help at all.

ALMA BIRK
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Department of the Environment

Sir, As a 'stately owner' (though the adjective is applied more often and more accurately to my home than to myself) I can see some merit in your suggestion that the state should buy all listed buildings and take on the landlord's duties of supervision and maintenance. On the assumption that government funds are unlimited and that nothing owned by the state is expected to make a profit, this plan would indeed ensure the preservation of many beautiful houses. To some of the owners it would come as a relief: our farm profits could be spent on ourselves, rather than on such tiresome chores as mending the roof, resurfacing the drive or eradicating dry rot from the ladies' toilets; and when our profits prove insufficient for these purposes, that would no longer be our problem.

And yet, I don't like it. Quite apart from the expense to the nation (Heveningham Hall cost us £300,000 and loses £30,000 or more a year) there is the personal aspect. Houses, however large, were built for people to live in. Left empty, they die a little. That may sound sentimental; but it is reflected in hard cash. Empty houses have less appeal to the tourist trade than those which are, literally, stately homes. Tourism seems to be becoming our only profitable industry, so it would be a pity to discourage it.

You did suggest that the occupants (presumably the former owners?) should have long leases. The National Trust has always offered leases in perpetuity. Sadly, there is no instance of this offer being taken up by a second generation. The National Trust does a wonderful job in preserving houses for posterity. It does not and cannot provide stately *homes* for the tourist trade.

You may wonder why people like me should be reluctant to become tenants of the National Trust or the state. It is purely personal. In spite of the financial problems, it is a marvellous privilege to own a place like Ragley. I have a fascinating job and I don't want to lose it. It might be boring to be one of the idle rich.

HERTFORD

Ragley Hall
Alcester
Warwickshire

Sir, With reference to your editorial on the preservation of the stately homes of England, I have an alternative proposal that Mr Crosland may find more acceptable. I suggest that their owners be subsidised by that other property-owning species, England's small landlords. Their properties have already been effectively requisitioned, without compensation, by law for the benefit of their tenants, while they are compelled to provide housing subsidies because the derisory rents legally enforced by the rent officers form only a small proportion of the interest on their mortgages. Therefore I suggest that this small and inarticulate section of the electorate be similarly utilised to do the Government's work, by a levy on the rateable value of their properties, to support those unfortunate people who find themselves the hereditary owners of a stately pile. The Government has totally abrogated responsibility for homelessness, security of tenure and low rents by deflecting the problem on to the shoulders of the private sector. I am confident that this addition to the statute books would not prove to be inconsistent.

JAMES STEVENS
Chairman, Small Landlords Association
Gunterstone Road
London W14

Is This Socialism?

Sir, I welcome Eric Heffer's article (NS 6 February). However, I am puzzled by some of his references to John Gollan's article 'Socialist Democracy – Some Problems', in the January issue of *Marxism Today*, which, it would appear, he has not read as thoroughly as he might have. He conveys the impression that the article avoids dealing with current problems of development of socialist democracy in the socialist countries, and especially in the USSR. On the contrary, John Gollan deals precisely with the issues which Eric Heffer implies are omitted, including the problem of dissent in socialist society – namely that it should be handled politically and not by administrative means. In doing so Gollan elaborates our party's established attitude endorsed once again as recently as November 1975 at our party congress. To say, therefore, that the whole article is invalidated by its last sentence is completely incorrect.

The reference in that sentence, by the way, is to the Soviet exposure of the Stalin 'deformations', not 'defamations'. It is useless in any serious examination of these problems to refuse to recognise the progress which the Soviet Union has accomplished on this. Surely, too, the relevance of that part of the article dealing with our party's principled position on political and democratic development to socialism in Britain is vital, whatever Eric Heffer's opinion may be about our political strength. In brief, we stand for a socialist society which guarantees the personal freedom, the plurality of political parties, the independence of the trade unions, freedom of religious belief, research, cultural and scientific activities. We seek the transition to this society through democratic political struggle in which the unity of socialists and communists is essential.

REUBEN FALBER
Assistant Secretary
Communist Party of Great Britain
16 King St
London WC2

Sir, Before Eric Heffer impugns the validity of criticism of the Labour Left (NS 6 February), he should watch his own statements. Far from having 'welcomed [Crosland's lecture] with such rapture', as Mr Heffer alleges, I attacked it sharply, both in an article in the *Sunday Telegraph* on 7 December and in a 13-page speech delivered on 16 December at Paddington, distributed by the Conservative Central Office.

I argued, and shall continue to argue, that expansion of state ownership, intervention and pre-emption of resources is such that, unless it is reversed, the private sector will be crushed beneath it in a matter of years. For the state sector, which includes council housing and state-subsidised private firms as well as the nationalised industries and bureaucracy, is maintained by the wealth-creating sector. Like any parasitic growth, it will be at a loss to survive after killing off its host. Nationalisation meant one thing while it was designed to appropriate wealth, another when it means being kept at the expense of a shrinking wealth-creating private sector, dangerously weakened by low profit and high taxation. This makes Crosland's advocacy of the mixed economy as meaningless as the Left's denigration of it.

Eric Heffer challenges the link which I assert between free enterprise and freedom but writes nothing to show, either in theory or practice, how freedom could survive state ownership and control of livelihood. Political democracy emerged with the growth of private economic activity and has nowhere survived it. Wherever revolutionary socialism has gained control, freedom has been extinguished. This consideration is reinforced by experience of socialist-inspired changes in this country where whole areas of freedom – in education, health care, the right to work without belonging to a union, as well as the right to a fair return for one's efforts – are all eroding. The power of local and central officials over our lives and property is increasing dangerously. All classes are affected.

I do not doubt Mr Heffer's sincerity, but if he wishes to reconcile socialism with freedom he will have to do better than say 'the Left should re-state its position'. So will those bolder souls in the Labour movement who are trying to rethink their position.

KEITH JOSEPH
House of Commons

The Reticence of Lord Ryder

Sir, Your anger over the reticence of Lord Ryder (NS 30 January) for his part in the Sussex land deal has blinded you about the Community Land Act which you labelled a 'mockery'. Had the Act and the 80-per-cent development land tax been on the statute book, Crawley council would have saved a great deal of money. Development land tax would have been applied to the difference between the original purchase price of £300,000 and its agri-

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cultural value and the £7m. for which the 300 acres was sold because it was wanted for development by the community – that is to £6.7m. That tax would have been £5,360,000. What's more, the Act would have enabled Crawley to buy the land for £1,640,000.

Some 'mockery'.

ROBIN CORBETT

House of Commons

Non-Playing Directors

Sir, Non-executive directors (NS 6 February) are – or at least should be – very valuable indeed. Not only are they there to monitor the performance of a company. They should be – and in the US increasingly are – advisers to the boards of companies. That is so because they are not burdened by having to cling on to jobs and positions, do not have to defend past or future mistakes made in the running of companies, and because they do not have to be polite about personal or management shortcomings of their colleagues. Their retainers are usually modest enough to enable them to speak and advise candidly without having to worry about their income from a single company source.

Intelligent non-executive directors put on a board not to drum up prestige but to get informed views and advice are very valuable to intelligent boardrooms.

W. P. JASPERT

93a Belsize Lane
London NW3

The Angolan Connection

Sir, In his otherwise interesting article, 'The Angolan Connection', (NS 30 January), David Martin makes an error of some importance in the context of Southern African affairs, when he says that President Kaunda 'did not respond to the overture' made in February 1974 by Mr John Vorster, the South African Prime Minister. The full story of the three-cornered attempt to settle the future of Mozambique *before* the April 1974 coup d'état in Portugal is told in my book *Cabora Bassa, Engineering and Politics in Southern Africa*; briefly it is as follows.

In the summer of 1973 (over a year after Vorster had published the interchange of letters which he himself had initiated with Kaunda) the Zambian and Malawian governments had become deeply disturbed by the war in Mozambique and its impact on their own internal security. Kaunda's public speeches in particular became more sympathetic towards Portugal. He and President Banda were approached by Jorge Jardim, the Mozambique business man and close confident of Caetano, with a scheme whereby Portugal would be offered a package settlement, within the terms of the Lusaka Manifesto, giving Frelimo its essential demands but on all other points sympathetic to the Lisbon government's need for an honourable withdrawal, and a safeguard for its investments in Mozambique. Jardim was trying to build up an all-party state inside Mozambique, in which he hoped Frelimo would join; for differing reasons the scheme appealed to Kaunda, Banda, and even to Frelimo, though only as a strictly short-term means to get the Portuguese army out.

The subsequent document, which was agreed by the three sides, envisaged independence on terms very like the 'free external association' dreamed up by De Valera for Ireland in 1921; it even allowed the Portuguese to retain bases in Mozambique; and it was shown to and approved by the South African Minister of Defence, P. Botha, in November 1973. This and much other evidence confirms that the South African government had adjusted its policies to the consequences of Portuguese withdrawal six months to a year before the Portuguese coup d'état; and explains why they were ready and prepared to make with General Spínola, Zaire and the United States the deal over Angola which Mr Martin goes on to describe.

Jardin's overture failed, not because of lack of support in Southern Africa, but because he was deflected by the right-wing resurgence in Lisbon which followed Spinola's publication of *Portugal and the Future* in January 1974. He did not deliver the document to Caetano until 17 April, only eight days before the coup, by which time it was too late to affect events.

KEITH MIDDLEMAS

School of Social Sciences
University of Sussex
Brighton

Subsidising the 'Listener'

Sir, The question Crucifer returns to in last week's NEW STATESMAN, of the *Listener* being subsidised from public funds, does not, in fact, arise at all. On a turnover of some £15m., as may be seen from the figures published in the *BBC Handbook*, BBC Publications as a whole made a sizeable pre-tax profit in 1972/3, and only a very small loss in the following two years, due not least to rapid cost increases and the effects of price control. BBC Publication confidently expect a substantial profit at the end of the current financial year.

KENNETH LAMB
Director, Public Affairs

BBC
Broadcasting House
London W1

CRUCIFER *writes*: Questions that bureaucrats believe do 'not arise' may still sometimes have to be answered – as Sir Hugh Greene recognised when he appeared before the Public Accounts Committee in 1962 and was asked specifically about the trading position of the *Listener*. If Sir Hugh could give the information then (a regular loss of some £40,000 a year) why is Mr Lamb so shy of providing it today? Is it because the losses have grown too large to be publicly defended? After all it's our money, not his.

Power to the Persons

Sir, Jill Craigie's strictures (NS 6 February) remind me of H. N. Brailsford's comment, made in 1913, that it was a pity that Mrs Pankhurst 'could not be given a chapel in Westminster Abbey and left there for adoration'. Hagiography is, after all, no substitute for biography, though if Jill Craigie, Midge Mackenzie and Antonia Raeburn prefer it that is their business. I favour a critical but fundamentally sympathetic approach and tried to use this in my earlier books. For this reason, I find such recent publications as Marion Ramelson's *Petticoat Rebellion*, Josephine Kamm's *Rapiers and Battleaxes*, Trevor Lloyd's *Suffragettes International*, Sheila Rowbotham's *Hidden From History*, and Andrew Rosen's *Rise Up Women!*, not to mention Elie Halévy's brilliant section on the feminist revolt in *The Rule of Democracy* (1932), far more rewarding than the flag-waving exercises of Mackenzie and Raeburn.

'Sour distortions' has of course been the standard response of Pankhurst-worshippers to any form of adverse criticism ever since Teresa Billington Greig published her book in 1911. One would not need to be a Tory to compile the kind of critical anthology about the Labour movement which Jill Craigie outlines: indeed, I think it might be rather a useful and entertaining project. John Masefield's abstract chivalry might have been severely shaken if, like H. W. Nevinson (with whom he collaborated for a while on an – abortive – Suffragette drama), he had known Emmeline at close quarters as well as 'in the spirit'.

Finally, I look forward with interest to Jill Craigie's version of the *Suffragette* campaign and its leaders. But it may not be entirely impertinent to point out that she has been in possession of the 'many hitherto unpublished papers' to which she refers for a very long time indeed, thus preventing irreverent cads like myself from considering what may be important evidence.

DAVID MITCHELL

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Immigration Officers

Sir, James Cameron slipped badly in abusing immigration officers as 'small-time gauleiters' (London Diary 30 January). These men and women have a most difficult job, and it is time for them to be defended against such scurrilous attacks. I have made a close study of illegal immigration, and I am staggered at the size and complexity of this problem – a problem pooh-poohed by some of the immigrants' 'welfare' services but admitted by ministers in India, for example. In the case of Mr Piara Singh I note that James Cameron admits that he does *not* know whether or not the immigration officer's disbelief was justified. Shame, then, on a man I have always admired for his sense of fair play. He should leave such abuse to the shrill and eager voices of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and other like-minded bodies which strive to conceal the extent of this country's generosity to immigrants – a generosity unmatched anywhere else in the Commonwealth or indeed in the world as a whole. How many people have been killed in race riots in Britain – and how many in the Indian sub-continent? How many countries allow appeals against their own governments on immigration issues? How many countries have race relations boards and community relations councils? How many countries are as reluctant to deport as Britain – and how many (especially in Africa) deport at the drop of a hat and with 24 hours' notice?

I write in my individual capacity, but many immigrants agree with me.

BERNARD V. SLATER
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Goodbye, Britain?

Sir, Hugh Richardson, in his fascinating review of Tony Aldous's *Goodbye, Britain?* (NS 30 January), mentions the sad fate awaiting Oxford's 19th-century street lamps. The council wants to replace them with new, bigger, brighter lamps but, in its haste to complete the work before the end of March, it has overlooked the fact that, since the lamps stand in a conservation area, it needs demolition consent from the DoE before it can do so. This it does not have, so in ripping up some of the lamps in Catte Street, which it did a couple of weeks ago, the council was acting illegally. And, in writing me a letter (dated 16 January) in which the city engineer says 'As these columns are of considerable local interest . . . there will in fact be at least the same number of these columns retained in the area as at present . . . The city council is conserving the old columns', the council is, apparently, also acting deceitfully.

DAN CRUICKSHANK

The Architects' Journal
9 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1

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BOOKS & ARTS

V. S. Pritchett

A Fast Heart-Beat

Eleven Stories by ANTON CHEKHOV translated and with an introduction by Ronald Hingley *Oxford* £1.75

Chekhov: The Evolution of His Art by DONALD RAYFIELD *Elek* £5.95

Chuckle with Chekhov translated by Harvey Pitcher and James Forsyth *Swallow House Books* £1.60

The second paperback selection from the Oxford Chekhov comes from his excellent period, the 1890s. They are translated by Ronald Hingley and among them are the long tale called *The Duel* on which he had worked with difficulty, *The Lady with the Dog*, *The Darling* (here called *The Angel*), the Gooseberry trilogy and the powerful documentary narrative called *The Peasants*, which caused something like a public sensation. The peasant had become a 'social problem'; the politically committed Radicals disliked Chekhov's independence and attacked him for lack of principles and indifference. They required doctrine and propaganda, not observation. This narrow warfare was – and still is – the bane of literary criticism in Russia, and Chekhov's roots in medicine and science made him exceptional – a kind of European 'sport'. He was not a thinker but he saw the problem.

He took each case separately: he was both artist and practical man. He was writing *The Duel* when he was inspecting the convict system in Sakhalin. He returned to work in the relief of cholera and famine, building schools, the organising of hospitals, clinics and libraries in his own part of the country. *The Peasants* reflects something gained from this activity; yet it is also the time of *The Black Monk*, which was dismissed as a piece of dabbling in the occult, but in the end seems to be an account of a heart attack or a stroke. This story is not included in the present volume but I mention it to show that what upset the ideologues was the range and variety of his responses as an artist.

I don't think, as Mr Hingley does, that *The Duel* is spoiled by its 'happy' ending, for it is not happy: the Layevskys are stunned. They have become a pair of discarded dolls with the stuffing coming out. Only time will show, perhaps, if they can make anything of their lives. The essence of Chekhov's art lies in *not* coming to conclusions, in being open-ended; though he may often describe frustration, he is really the intensely animated, even excited, energetic revealer of self-deceit and what he calls false feelings. The feeble, 'superfluous man' Layevsky, and his weak, promiscuous girl have 'false emotions'; but so has the violent zoologist and Darwinian von Koren, who thinks the Layevskys of this world ought to be killed off. So also has the doctor, who is humane enough but is also irrational; for him everything German is evil, in politics and science: 'He couldn't say where he had picked up the idea, but he held it tenaciously.' As usual in Chekhov the important thing is the ability to show the incidents of a story rising naturally and vividly out of the incongruous small events and absurb phrases of everyday life. Where shall the shady Layevsky be found trying to confess he has lost his faith in the simple life and is going to trick his girl and abandon her; on the highest principles too? Well, while bathing; his arguments become less and less honest as each wave of the sea ducks him. The strength of Chekhov lies in his original and apparently lightly carried power of showing *how* things happen and not in the same way to all concerned in them.

The Peasants is less a story than a collection of incidents that convey what poverty is like, in the sense that it is a sub-culture of its own. Everything depends on the choice of the right detail and showing it as an aspect of living. A broken Moscow waiter decides to move back with his parents and children to the home where he was brought up in the country. His childhood memories have deceived him. How to describe the crucial shock of arrival? Chekhov describes him looking into a filthy hut, not a house, but a shed half filled with a dirty stove covered with soot and flies on which a ragged girl is sitting. The parents are out in the fields and the child says nothing:

> A white cat rubbed itself against the fire irons on the floor. Sasha [the waiter's child] beckoned to it.
> 'Puss, puss. Come here pussy.'
> 'She can't hear,' said the little girl. 'Deaf.'
> 'Why?'
> 'Someone hit her.'

By a single line we are prepared for squalour, rancour, drunken fighting, the rabid greed of poverty, the blaspheming grandmother, the loose-living daughter who comes home stripped of her clothes. A neighbouring hut catches fire and no one knows how to put it out; the tax collector comes for arrears and takes the samovars from every hut. He is a cynical collector of samovars and lines them up in his own place. One young girl can read and, in a conceited way, breaks into Gospel reading. Yet there is nothing Zola-like in Chekhov's descriptions of the vile; they are not rhetorically vile. The waiter dies and his wife and her child leave to beg on the road. The wife thinks:

> Yes they were frightful people to live with. Still, they were men and women, they suffered and wept like men and women, and there was nothing in their lives for which an excuse could not be found . . . She now felt sick with pity for all these people and kept turning back to look at the huts.

What is striking about *The Peasants* is that Chekhov was able to catch every small drama in the lives of the community he describes into 30 pages, without for a moment losing his limpidity and the sense that what he wrote was being lived in a different way, hour by hour.

Chekhov's own short life was restless, avid and packed with people and work, excited by his will for responsibility, given to travel and mild dissipations. He could not resist spending himself. He was very nimble and drastic in preserving his personal freedom. One feels the fast heart-beat in his stories: he has freed *them* from what encumbers. His conscience is entirely without the disquisitional blur. He writes his tragedies as comedies because comedy is open and leaves a door by which we leave for a new fate.

This last Mr Hingley understands. His translations will pass very well, though he doesn't escape the well-known difficulties when he tries to bring some passages of dialogue up to date. Chekhov was often jaunty and facetious in his letters to his friends and family, but not at all in his writing after his early period of writing farce. Mr Hingley's trouble is that he can drop into breeziness and he mixes his period conventions when he does so:

> 'It beats me how you put up with the blighter, it really does. Horrible little creep! Honestly gentlemen, how *can* you live here? Your air stifles a man, damn it. Call yourselves teachers, do you. Educators? You're just a lot of little hacks. It's no temple of learning this isn't – it's more like a suburban police station and it smells as sour as a sentry box.'

Only the last image in that passage is well caught. And Mr Hingley's introduction is not at ease where he is obviously appealing to new readers who are shy of Russian literature. Phrases like 'amorous posture' and 'saga' to describe the subject and treatment of *The Lady with a Dog*; 'liquidation-ripe', as von Koren's opinion of Layevsky, and that tired old cliché 'the human predicament' are packaged English.

Mr Rayfield's study is an intelligent corrective to those of us who have a static Chekhov in our heads and forget that his art passes through very different phases. He is particularly good on Chekhov's wide reading of European novelists. He saw what was useful in Zola, for example, and what to reject. He read, as an imaginative writer does, for what might be there for him and to act upon it at once. Although he was European in will he got little out of Europe when he travelled: he was a poor linguist. One is struck by his sense of nature as an unconnected presence before which we live. Mr Rayfield considers a much larger number of the stories than other critics usually do and he is excellent on the way the masterpieces like *A Dreary Story* and *The Duel* and especially *The Bishop* are put together, on the change in his late style and on his unforced and delicately domesticated symbolism. In Chekhov the great, central, boring but fundamental preoccupations of human life are broken down, so that in seeming to be transient they dis-

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solve 'character' as we know it in Western tradition. There is enormous gain in affective power. Mr Rayfield understands this and the feverish life that left nothing wasted. Students will find the book invaluable and the general reader will find new light in this scholar's intimacy with his subject.

Chuckle with Chekhov is a title the young Chekhov might have invented himself for the highly-spiced pickle he turned out as a 'hungry scoundrel' for the papers in which he signed himself Chekhonte. ('It's only temporary. I shan't die as one'.) The sketches are knockabout, slangy brainwaves. Their tone reminds one of the facetious letter he wrote to a too adoring woman, when he said he was 'cleaning off her tear-stains on his jacket with benzine'. One brainwave however is bright: civil servants are seen playing whist with cards which bear photographs of the higher and lower members of their department. I suggest we try this on a pack of our politicians. I would guess the translation is broad and very approximate. It is odd to think of Chekhov growing out of Music Hall.

Robin Lane Fox

Athletes' Feats

Olympic Games by M. I. FINLEY and H. W. PLEKET *Chatto* £5.00

The Olympic Games seem to have begun in 776 BC. They were held for another thousand years, and women were excluded throughout. The Greeks' reputation as natural competitors owes something to the fine fieldwork of modern anthropologists, but the Games take its origins back behind the simplified values of Homeric heroes or the poet Hesiod's eighth-century views on honour and shame. Slavs and Turks may have corrupted the blood and the food; goats and shipbuilders have continued to strip the landscape, but the value of 'honour' (of a sort) still colours so many accepted Greek attitudes, whether to wives and cousins or to temporary stays in prison. Contacts between modern and ancient Greece are often bogus. This one at least deserves to be located.

In the best German essay on archaic Greece, Burckhardt described the seventh century BC as the age of the competitive, or 'agonal', man; Moses Finley, in books for the *modern* reader, has kept the 'agon' in the centre of the picture. Oddly, the Games, the supreme competition, have not been prominent in post-war classicists' discussion of Greece as a shame-culture. This survey, then, is welcome for more than its photographs: it does not exactly seize the heart or turn the head in new directions, but it shows up some singular points which are too often lost in archaeological journals or in arguments about the nature of the starting-gate. It is no doubt a while since Finley was last in training, so he has been joined by Dr Pleket, well-known as an epigraphist and historian and here described as an enthusiastic sportsman.

The style, the lecture as general literature, has Finley's pungency throughout. Exceptions prove rules: points interlock when they are not shot through with this or that; joint authorship adds a new dimension to the use of the first person plural; even a hardening of the arteries is institutional. The qualities will be familiar to Greek historians who would never miss a Finley book even if they think that on his major themes, the nature of Homeric society and the ancient economy, he has been barking up two wrong trees. At least he sees the wood, and even in this book the discussions of athletes' pensions, the state support of individual effort or the tensions in the origins of the gymnasium are admirably handled. Trainers and their manuals, prizes, professionalism and punishments, not least flogging, are given a useful work-out, and Olympia's conservatism is well stressed as a feature of its long supremacy.

The boxing matches were the nasty ones. Men died from the whack of a leather-thonged wrist, and the boxer was more feared than the rough 'pancratiast' who could do almost anything except gouge out the eyes. Olympia never lost its supremacy to other games which offered money prizes. The authors praise its administration but are alive to the sharp practices, too – the fudging of birth-dates among boy competitors or the elbowing on the run-in to a single winning post. The facilities for visitors were not up to much, and the custom of holding training-matches during the month of preparation seems rather odd. Athletes were not considered to be good in battle, although Alexander's 'surveyors' and road-measurers are likely to have been prize runners.

The details never take over the text, and not much is omitted. Personally, I would not visit Olympia without sparing a thought for Peregrinus, the Cynic turned Christian who burnt himself before the second-century audience. If social status, as here, is to be a central topic of a Games book, then more attention should be paid to the evidence from Hellenistic Egypt where the subject can at least be followed through. The 'discovery' by a Euboean fisherman of an ivory bone from the hero Pelops's artificial shoulder and his presentation of it to archaic Olympia may be one possible way into the tantalising history of the early struggle to dominate the site. The snatches of Greek sports-literature have still not been exhausted, and their taste for Homeric phrasing should not be left only to compilers of literary commentaries. Theocritus, surprisingly, is the one Greek poet who shows that he knew how to box.

Finley and Pleket write with the modern Games and their French founder's elitism

Defendants in the Criminal Process
A. E. BOTTOMS and J. D. McCLEAN
The defendant in a criminal case is in a unique position to experience the whole criminal process from the first questions of the investigating policeman, through the trial, to the sentencing and possible appeal. Based on a close observation of criminal cases, and interviews with both convicted and acquitted, the study examines the practical workings of the English criminal court systems. Many of its findings are disturbing and challenge complacency as to the quality of English justice. *International Library of Social Policy* £7.50.

The Right to a Decent House
SIDNEY JACOBS
How does a city council go about rehousing a community? This detailed case study of a community action project describes how, with the help of outside community activists, the local people organized themselves into a committee to protect their interests. It is a fascinating social document which directs new light on the housing problem, local bureaucracy and community action. *Direct Edition* £3.50.

Routledge & Kegan Paul

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well to the fore. They start by listing the questions which 'every reader' will be asking for himself: among others, 'who participated?', 'how were the Games managed?', 'was there criticism?', 'was amateurism and professionalism an issue?'. The modern Olympics do not cause this fan or, I suspect, many others, to ask anything of the sort. One wonders, from a modern armchair, how fast the Greeks ran and how high they jumped. At Olympia, no records survive because none was kept. So that, from a modern angle, is almost that, though the Greeks' habit of carrying dumb-bells when taking a standing jump has now been proved to have increased their jumping-span.

If the ancient Olympics still live for more than twenty pages, they live through their place in two wider contexts, both of them rooted in the world of antiquity. Neither is fully exploited in this book. The first is the context of Greek political development, the rise of the tyrannies and their search, as at Delphi, for an extra-territorial focus of prestige and cult: the Olympic Games were a religious concourse and their goddess Hearth was honoured in a public temple which no family or group of families are likely to have controlled. The political myths which were spun round Olympia's prehistory in the process deserve a spirited exposure.

The other context is more elusive. The authors stress how the aristocratic values of the games persisted when their aristocratic entry and society had faded away. But the theme stretches way beyond the racetrack, for the metaphors written large at Olympia were carried over into so many other areas of ancient life, not just the 'agon' of a dialogue or a law-court, as they recognise, but the way men related themselves to the supernatural or even imagined their erotic life. The inner and outer 'endurance' of the Christian, the labours of the athlete before God, the 'horse-racings' of the promiscuous and the reign of Miss Wrestling-ring in the Greek Perfumed Arena are the high and low points of a way of thought which leads into so many intermediate attitudes of ancient men.

Among them is to be found the idea of equality itself. 'Competitive honour as an ideal in Greek culture,' a sociologist has recently written, 'still seems to have the high degree of societal desirability that equality has for Americans.' Her view can be stood on its head. Competitive honour, as Hesiod was aware, could be won only in competition between equals. The authors note how Olympic athletes of all social backgrounds stood as equals on the starting line. But again, they might have taken their picture further. The idea of equality was first conceived by aristocrats, and it was central to the growth of the Games in an aristocratic age. When Alexander was later asked if he would compete in an Olympic footrace, 'only', he is said to have remarked, 'if I have kings as my competitors'. I doubt if the remark is genuine, but this book could have made it speak for more than his reluctance to 'risk defeat', except in war. If one must look for a paradox in ancient society, the paradox which lives in the Games is that equality and competitive honour began as a pair in an aristocratic culture and although they were diffused, they were never destroyed or split apart.

P. P. Streeten

Jam Tomorrow

Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Change by PETER L. BERGER *Allen Lane* £5.50

At the end of his new book, Professor Berger sees social scientists divided into two groups. First, there are the technicians who pay close attention to what the world is like. This group either has no interest in even imagining how the world might be different, or it insists that such visions must be excluded from the field of social sciences. They are the pedants.

Secondly, there is a smaller group who present us with utopian visions of different possibilities of social life. They dislike precision and attention to detail as passionately as the first group is dedicated to them. This disdain for facts and logic applies both to what exists today and to the imagined future. To think about details is to betray the revolution.

Berger deplores this division between technicians and visionaries. He pleads for transcending the dichotomy between pedantry and utopianism in an informed fantasy – a pedantic utopianism or a utopian pedantry –, imaginative visions of alternative options, with close and precise attention to the detailed working of these alternatives. In this book he lays the foundations for doing just that. He is that rare sociologist who has something important and original to say, and says it in a manner that not only can be generally understood, but is spell-binding. He uses reflections on the Third World as a method of illuminating political ethics and a critique of political ethics as an approach to development in the Third World.

The benefits and costs of development are subjected to the 'calculus of pain' and the 'calculus of meaning'. By benefits and costs Berger does not mean what cost-benefit economists mean, who know the shadow price of everything and the value of nothing. In Berger's analysis the costs of capitalist development are hunger today with a promise of affluence tomorrow; the costs of socialist development are terror today with the promise of a humane order tomorrow. These costs are unacceptably high and the promises questionable. But Berger does not neglect the costs of leaving things as they are. 'Not only revolutions cause suffering and death; the status quo can also kill, often by hunger rather than by bullets.' Costs and benefits are also covered by 'the calculus of meaning', for at the heart of modernisation is a transformation of the meanings by which men live, a revolution of the structure of consciousness.

The villains in his story are ideologies, petrified concepts, 'syllogism-daggers' formulated by intellectuals, implemented by policy makers, suffered by the inarticulate common people. The discussion of the links between theorising and oppressing leads to a critique of the concept of 'consciousness-raising' (the method by which an oppressed group is taught to understand its condition and to be activated for the revolutionary transformation of this condition) and of the relation between cognitive imperialism, cognitive participation and cognitive respect. For cognition itself is a social activity. Every individual knows his own world better than the 'experts' know it, and therefore has a right to participate in formulating political choices that affect him. The claims of politicians and intellectuals to know better are spurious and have led to catastrophic consequences.

Berger's position on 'the calculus of pain' is like Popper's. For political purposes, the principle: maximise pleasure! should be replaced by: minimise pain! (Strictly speaking suffering, unlike blood, cannot be added. The maximum pain that a single person can suffer, horrible though it is, is also the maximum suffering in the universe. It is clearly worse for two to suffer than for one; and worse still for a million. But the reason cannot be that numbers increase 'the sum of misery'.) The attempt to maximise pleasure is not only bound to fail but is extremely dangerous because it leads to the imposition of suffering for the sake of promises of uncertain future bliss. The 'postulate of ignorance' should make us hesitate to embark on policies that exact high human costs. Berger illustrates this by comparing Brazil, the capitalist model, with China, the socialist.

Both capitalist and socialist development contain myths: the former the myth of steady material progress through technological control and ever-widening choice, the latter of a brotherhood of man, an end of anomie and alienation, a home-coming. There are also parallels in the manner in which present miseries are justified in both systems – economic miseries in one, political miseries in the other. 'Spread effects' and 'trickle-down effects' carry the promise of more for everybody tomorrow; 'the withering away of the state' carries the promise of liberty and democracy tomorrow.

There are common themes in three sources of revolt against the myth of growth and its technocratic carriers: in the counterculture of the young in the West, in the aspirations for a 'Marxist humanism' in Eastern Europe and in the quest for new 'alternatives' in development in the Third World. In spite of the appearance of two colliding bandwagons, the common theme 'gives deeper credence to the identification with the Third World to be found in counter-culture and New Left ambiences in the West'. The identification of the young with the Third World

> is based on a sound instinct. What is sound is, quite simply, the recognition that intact traditional cultures provide meanings for their members that are lacking in fully modernised societies.

Between the chapters developing the argument, there are short, vivid vignettes, illustrating movingly and wittily the damaging impact of theories on individuals and communities. My favourite one is a splendid tale of the gang of 'call girls' meeting at yet another international development conference, passing with some embarrassment a resolution proposed by a bearded

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youth, to declare their solidarity with the 'underlying population' of hotel servants, by making their own beds and shining their own shoes, only to be threatened by a strike until the resolution is rescinded. The final interlude contrasts contemporary Spain with the hopes and ideals for which both Republicans and Nationalists died in the Civil War.

Berger will irritate the Left for his critical assessment of China and he will annoy the Right, if not for his indictment of Brazil, then for his opposition to Vietnam. He invites us to seek new solutions to social problems by combining compassion with careful, detached analysis.

Christopher Hitchens

Crime Yellow

The Day Guernica Died by GORDON THOMAS and MAX MORGAN-WITTS *Hodder & Stoughton* £4.95

The destruction of Guernica, and the argument that persists about it, has the same flavour as other controversies over horrors of the Thirties – the murder of Lorca, the burning of the Reichstag, the Kirov assassination. Establishing the responsibility is at first sight a bit like travelling in time and shooting one's adolescent grandfather; it changes nothing in the real world. But it is important in tracing genealogy, and the fact that Russian politics today consists so much of a struggle for the right to study history is one indication of the potential of such projects.

The Nuremburg war crimes tribunal refused to consider Guernica as a count in the indictment because they ruled that it was not an event of the second world war. (They also ruled that aerial bombing of cities was not a real war crime anyway, and one can see why the Allied prosecutors took such a view.) The authors here attempt to show that Guernica was indeed part of the second world war and an essential prelude to the Nazi strategy of aggression. They succeed in proving this much, and one would have to reject the whole assumption of fascism as an aggressive force in the first place to refute their case. In recent months in Spain itself the authorities have not bothered to suppress forensic evidence that Guernica was destroyed by the German Condor Legion; as a lie, the allegation that the Basques had destroyed their own religious capital lost its usefulness a generation ago. The uncertainty now concerns the motivation of the Hitler-Franco forces in laying Guernica waste.

Here the authors advance their point of view that it was a deliberate act of terrorism; a conclusion which certainly settles well with their Frederick Forsyth style of story-telling as history. This idiom, which omits no detail at all – we learn the price of getting laid if you were a Nazi airman, and more or less every trimming included in the deal – is okay for scene-setting in the other Thomas-Witts specials which reconstruct disasters after the event. But it gets in the way when the authors are attempting to settle a disputed point, and partially conceals the fact that in this case they leave the dossier open. There is marvellous new material gathered from Von Richthofen's merry men, and a strong presumption of their guilt in a deliberate massacre does emerge. But not conclusively.

This is not absolutely surprising – I have met young Basques in Guernica who claimed to be unaware that the place had ever been bombed at all. Whereas Picasso could convey an impression of evil, Morgan-Witts and Thomas try (and fail) to provide an anatomy of it. The thing is, surely, that there is the atrocity of war, and the atrocity in war. For the purpose of analysing a fascist attack on democracy, the distinction is a phoney one. The tactics derived from the strategy; the strategy was to eliminate all opposition. Guernica was neither just a military operation nor simply a war crime. Like My Lai, it was both; and, like My Lai, inevitably so.

I. A. Richards

Everyday Reflection

Wait, Wait for nothing from the lobby summit.
Wait on for *Nothingnesse that cometh last.*
Wait till the world default, when Present, Past
And Futures, all, into the discard plummet.

So calmly do we watch, it well might seem
We motionlessly had our fate forestalled,
Had slipt away, got clear; or, reinstalled,
Could now our world and our own selves redeem.

Regard what might have been Man's part. Our sloth,
Neglect, disdain; our pitiless spite and greed,
Squandering what could serenely serve all need,
Are not our worst betrayals of our Troth.

The worst is we have time and power still,
If we would Will anew, to save not kill.

C. H. Rolph

Helping Hands

Rehabilitation and Deviance by PHILIP BEAN *Routledge* £4.50 and £2.25

This is what you might call an emphatically tentative book about the idea that prisoners can be rehabilitated, either in prison or outside. Far from going into detail about what we ought to try instead, it ends (I think justifiably) on a rather hopeless note:

> I keep asking for a debate, where labels such as punitive, reactionary, weak, and permissive are not the controlling forces. In this book I have tried to pose some of the questions: hopefully others will continue the discussion.

Mr Bean lectures in applied social science at Nottingham University, from an experience as research officer with the Medical Research Council and as a London probation officer. He is worth listening to.

His theme is that too many people are being 'sentenced to receive help'; that rehabilitative treatment consists mainly of talk – though each beneficiary gets, on average, only about 40 minutes' talk per annum because that's as much as he will put up with; and that rehabilitation has produced a pseudo-scientific tyranny, wielded by re-

"A vivid and moving account of what happened in this little Spanish town on that dreadful day in April 1937 . . . they have succeeded in uncovering much that is new."
Philip Knightley, Spectator

GORDON THOMAS and MAX MORGAN-WITTS

THE DAY GUERNICA DIED

"Compulsively readable book . . . historians as well as ordinary readers can both be grateful for so firm a clincher."
Economist

£4·95

Hodder & Stoughton

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search workers and practitioners with a power little short of the Divine Right of Kings. Incidentally Mr Bean is very good on the immense influence now being exercised by the probation officer in the witness box with his 'social inquiry report'. If, as a defendant, you get an eloquent and persuasive one written about you, in fairly unconventional language, your luck is in. A report loaded with the old clichés about on-going situations, structured environments, meaningful dialogues and the rest of it can really put the judge's back up. Mr Bean thinks that both kinds of report, since they are based largely on hearsay, should be open to far more rigorous cross-examination.

He deprecates the 'labelling' of offenders, as all good criminologists do today; but turning his disapproval on to their labellers, he begins all over again by pinning labels on *them*. Thus there are three 'separate approaches' to the crime problem, used respectively by (1) the rehabilitationist, (2) the liberal reformist, and (3) the radical non-interventionist. He shows some sympathy with the reactionary nihilism of No 3 and none at all with the other two. I myself fall in with No 2, believing that:

> criminal behaviour is general, but that the incidence of conviction is controlled in part by chance and in part by social processes which divide society into the criminal and non-criminal, the former corresponding roughly to the poor and underprivileged.

He almost demolishes the case for sentencing panels to take over from the judges and magistrates; thinks the 'Police Court Missionaries' were still doing the probation work in 1933 (they went out in 1907); and shows a most unusual sympathy with the present unhappy position of the ordinary prison officer, reduced once again – by the influx of 'prison welfare officers' – to turnkey and head-counter. He is grievously unfair in saying that penal reform ignores the suffering citizen and that 'concern for the offender's welfare has not produced a similar concern for the victim' (has he not heard the early story of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, does he know about the National Victims Association?). And he calls for the abolition of 'coercive help', whether from psychiatry, welfare, or 'statutory after-care'. He wants to see training rather than 'treatment', and argues the case for it more powerfully than (I believe) he really intended to. In exposing 'the delusive simplicity of the rehabilitative ideal', he hasn't given much thought to the effect of one-to-one relationships with 'voluntary associates', though these have, to my own knowledge, kept many a man out of prison for good. But he wanted to shake people out of their complacency and get them arguing. He thoroughly deserves to succeed.

Susannah Clapp

Strong Solutions

A Dove of the East by MARK HELPRIN *Hamish Hamilton* £3.50
The President's Doctor by WILLIAM WOOLFOLK *W. H. Allen* £3.95
A Proper Man by JONATHAN LYNN *Heinemann* £3.50

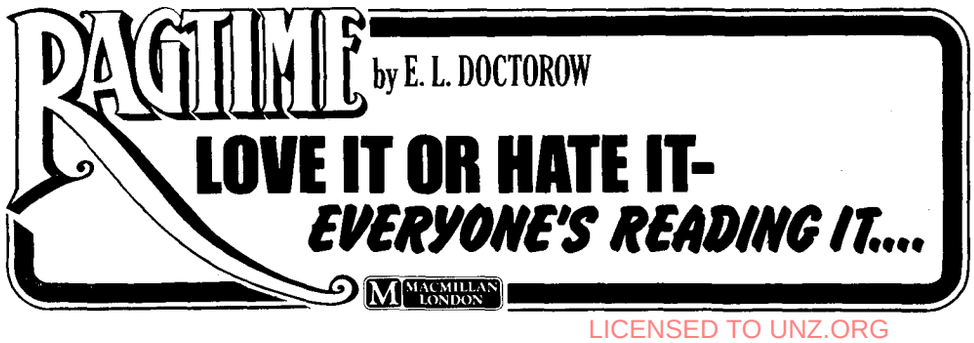
The 20 stories which make up Mark Helprin's *A Dove of the East* concentrate on scrupulous, self-contained individuals whose lives are monopolised by dreams or memories. A young man and an older woman spend one chaste afternoon eating apples together, and separately contrive to feed off the experience emotionally, for the rest of their lives; an old Persian Jew vanquishes the half-devil he first encountered as a youth; a neat-featured clerk suddenly proclaims his faith in true love, and describes the death of his childhood sweetheart; or a grizzled Parisian, scouting for cattle paths on the Golan, sits by a dying dove and thinks of his war-vanished wife.

This insistence on inward peering and crystallising at all costs is dealt one quick blow, in a winsome story about Whistler's 'White Girl', where the subject of the painting complains that the 'plague of our generation is the plague of all generations, is that we are searching for essences'. Since this lament is clearly in the same category as complaining about one's burdensome intelligence, it doesn't require action: Whistler's wife presses on in the service of essences, and most of the other characters in these stories believe in, and get pleasure from orchestrating their worlds in accordance with an idea or image. So, it seems, does Mark Helprin: a composer writes music 'as deep and blue as a fjord', halyards appear 'stretched musically', someone's life comes up a 'deep cool colour'. Etched against sea or prairie, carefully assimilating themselves to natural phenomena, Helprin's small figures are often the focus of very pretty snapshots: a woman with a white hat on a train looking at a golden mountain; another woman opening clams whose shells catch the colour of cloud and breakers. But, since several of these tales seem to be reaching towards unselfconscious fable, it is unfortunate that they are so awash with abstractions: characters seem to be caught clutching their significance to themselves, often with little indication of how their day-to-day lives may be affected, never with any sense of another view being possible – there is no humour in these stories. Intoxicated by his interplay of music and colours, Helprin frequently manages to suggest that a truth is being imparted, when in fact he's conveying an impression. His writing is distinctive, but needs to be tied down.

In *The President's Doctor* William Woolfolk makes some claim to be talking about the observable practical world. The novel features Carter Fitzsimmons, a lonely economist with long legs, who lopes back to America from the 'dark troubled African continent' to find his old college friend, now President Rushton, suffering from mysterious pains, uncontrollable outbursts of anger, alarming malleability in the hands of a rabid anti-Red, and a general lack of that 'unexplainable charisma' which got him the job. As indicated by his shambling gait, Carter is both intelligent and nice. While a China-US military alliance is planned, the Russians threaten bombs, and a state of emergency is declared allowing journalists to be tortured and blacks shot, Carter discovers that Dr Marvin Thatcher has made the President into a junkie. Dr Marvin Thatcher – the names are the most convincing part of this book – is duly dismissed, and order restored in time for Carter to have bliss with a nurse whose body is 'a smooth moulding of bronze'.

Real-life parallels are insisted on, in an attempt to nudge the reader towards the view that these villainies and blunders are highly probable – after all, 'there was Kennedy and the Bay of Pigs, LBJ and Vietnam, Nixon and Watergate . . .' Such examples may produce a despairing cynicism of the 'I'd believe anything of US presidents' kind, but they hardly increase the likelihood of this particular set of events. And none of it is enough to justify the weariness of the general truths in which the novel deals: that the Magna Carta was a long time ago but 'basic problems don't change' and that people should shake themselves free of their pasts – and be honest.

Jonathan Lynn's first novel is an altogether gentler, more meanderingly English affair. *A Proper Man* tells of secret embraces and murder near Mevagissey, and illustrates by default that novels which fall into the dubious category of 'psychological thrillers' profit as much as any others from the inclusion of interesting people, not simply people with problems. George Whyte is a prosperous middle-aged pianist, fully equipped with Balenciaga after-shave, Gucci suitcases and a Bentley. He is homosexual and frightened of having his private life revealed (he 'definitely regarded himself as emotionally scarred'), but his main fear – a not unreasonable one, though paraded here as if it were peculiarly esoteric – is of dying. Both fears are fully exploited by Jim, an ex-con of rough good looks – and a lot of sweating, some rather unlikely stupidity and a bit of violence lead up to a grisly end. Truth-telling also takes place, in large quantities – much of it well-intended, little of it new, some of it unhelpful. George's plaintive comment that 'when they were not being witty and brittle and bright, his gay friends all had such sad faces' is typical: it doesn't take into account all those heterosexuals with sad faces who never even get to be witty.



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Film Books

John Coleman

After Babel

A History of the Cinema: From its Origins to 1970 by ERIC RHODE *Allen Lane* £10.00
A Biographical Dictionary of the Cinema by DAVID THOMSON *Secker & Warburg* £8.50
Directors and Directions by JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR *Eyre Methuen* £5.00 and £2.25

Here, advocated with varying degrees of warmth, are three books no self-suspecting regular filmgoer should be without. They contain enough matter for debate (and, alas, for review) to occupy a cantankerous lifetime: the head nodding pleased assent to a judgment contained in one may find itself rolling in the gutter as its owner flips the pages of another. Of such is the kingdom of criticism; and never more so than in those of its parks and wastelands devoted to Film.

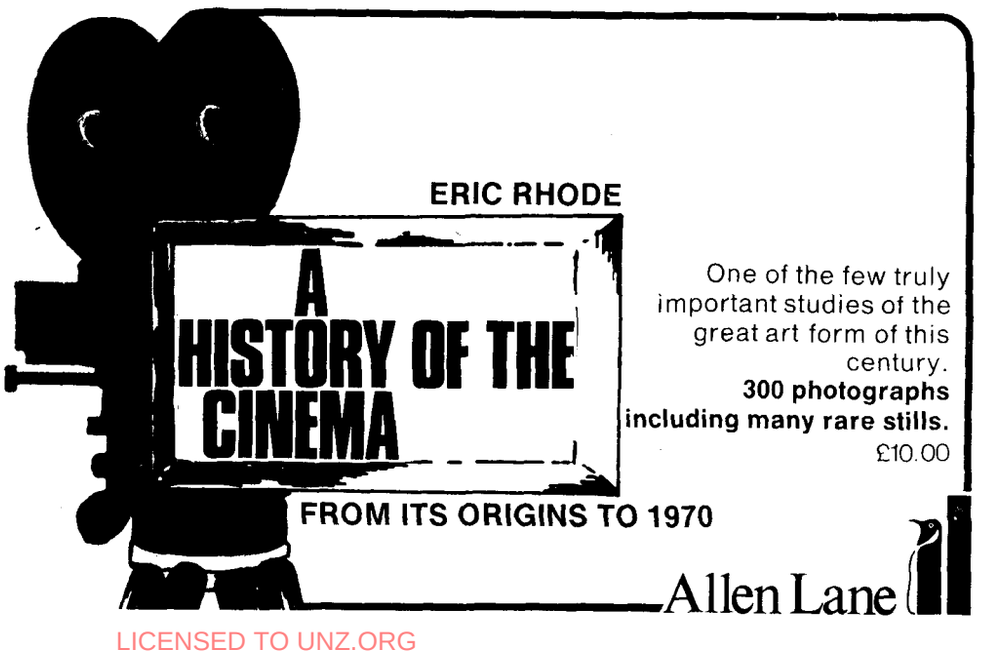
To begin with the bulkiest and best, Eric Rhode's chronological *A History of the Cinema* (David Robinson's 1973 work had a simpler, more restricted aim) is the first comprehensive attempt in English to test the theme – in the author's own words – 'that some insight might be gained by relating movies, and the people who make them, to the culture of their society'. It is an ambitious project but, should the odd reader already be reaching for his gun, let me stay his hand. Rhode is that rarity among writers on cinema: he is literate, he has wider terms of reference in the other arts than most, and he is given to defining them. Whatever his avowed brief, films and their creators take pride of place and it is only exceptionally that he falls into the fashionable error, promulgated in recent treatises on the role of women or blacks in movies, of stretching a symbol here, a sequence there, to adjust his material to some Procrustean concept. Nor, to scotch another possible misprision, is this in any sense a film student's analogue of Dr Leavis's *The Great Tradition*. Perhaps there has been a slight though still wrong-headed confusion between this history and Rhode's 1966 *Tower of Babel*, 11 essays on directors who peculiarly fascinated him. Perhaps, again, not. Anyone embarking on a bird's-eye view of world cinema is almost sure to find an embittered falcon overhead.

Let me postpone my small, ragged swoops. Rhode negotiates the early years – the technical inventions and discoveries and disputes as to who initiated, who perfected what; the primitive first reels; and what he calls 'the age of D. W. Griffith' – with a confidence that masks the complexity of such a reduction: and already there are cool, unexpected liaisons. The Dadaists found a 'kind of testament' in Keystone knockabout: Sennett would have none of this nonsense, trusting his own without need of theory. This often ludicrous gap between heady intellectuals and dollar-conscious practitioners is a recurring motif: as time marches on through Rhode's packed pages, we may watch it dwindle, till the famous-infamous 1948 article of Alexandre Astruc's – which introduced the ambiguous phrase *caméra-stylo* – is there to link arms with the studies in semiology of Roland Barthes twenty years later. One should perhaps stress that this apparent jump on my part quite fairly mirrors a similar to-and-fro of reference in a work which, though by and large chronological, makes a virtue of flying high enough on occasion to take in the whole sweep of film landscape. It needs a tenacious, well-stocked mind to note that Gallic appreciation of DeMille's 1915 *The Cheat* was based 'on one of those fruitful misunderstandings that so often happen when the French write about the American cinema' (shades of *Cahiers du Cinéma* to come) or that 'if Marlon Brando, James Dean and Marilyn Monroe had anything in common, it was a wish to solicit pity from their audiences' (for, after all, 'Tracy, Cagney, Gable or Hepburn never behaved as though the world owed them a living').

I choose to dwell on this snappishness for two reasons, the first of which is that it leads Rhode into more than a handful of judgments of – to me – over-extreme acerbity. De Sica and Zavattini are at fault because they 'cling to the surface of things, and in their clinging assume a perpetual complaint': so bang goes *Bicycle Thieves* and, subsequently, *Umberto D.* and Kurosawa's *Living*. (The section on Japanese cinema, and notably on the skilfully differentiated achievements of Mizoguchi and Ozu, otherwise registers as one of the book's finest things.) And this hopefully therapeutic wrist-slapping, which leaves me more bruised than braced, seems part of a dubious indulgence in psycho-sexual explanations where something less radical might do: there is the 'anal sadism and fecality' of poor Sennett's comedies; in Gance's *La Roue*, 'it is possible to surmise some displaced genital activity' and so on.

Nevertheless, there *is* a reviving side to this severity before it becomes couch-work, very firmly reflected in David Thomson's *Biographical Dictionary*. Mr Thomson studied at the London School of Film Technique and now teaches in New Hampshire: being a pupil of his must be at once genial and maddening. He himself terms his essentially serious dictionary (far fewer entries than Halliwell's but much more wordage on them, both directors and actors) swollen, quirky, personal, opinionated and obsessive: and he is right. Dipping, one disinters his dislike for the *politique des auteurs*: what amount to short articles on such craftsmen and artists as Buñuel, Fassbinder, Hitchcock, *et al*; his devotion to the Granada, Tooting, where he first saw James Dean; and knuckle-duster openings like this on Yul Brynner – 'The only bald, ex-trapeze artist, philosophy graduate of the Sorbonne to star in films: so much originality, so little interest.' Somewhere in the not too distant future I shall have read it from end to end, only not in a straight line, when a clearer picture of its compiler may have emerged. Meanwhile, one is grateful for its freshness, its basic impiety: it is maybe mean-spirited to wish it had devoted a bit more of the undoubted energy on display to a final polishing of the grammar. Some of Thomson's constructions are eccentric, too: not just his opinions.

Invoking this all-too-apparent labour of love merely to point up that Rhode has his way with a tart locution as well would be to do it a grave injustice; but it would be equally dishonest to pretend one has not found it helpful in that respect. For, if the author of *A History* is by no means the sprightliest of stylists, that is hardly a virtue one instinctively expects in someone committed to the long haul. Reining in the temptation to quote at greater length, I detect little amiss in a Rhode sentence apropos Humphrey Jennings: 'He films the immeasurably precious qualities of ordinary life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with the intensity of a desert island castaway sending off his last message in a bottle.'

By the intrinsic nature of the bastard art it endeavours to systematise, any general work on the cinema will be an affair of stops and starts and any review of it inadequate since it deals in so many fragmented items. One might take issue with several of Rhode's generalities, for instance his tendency to see the enervating cult of the victimised child behind Italian neo-realism; his rather hasty way with the actualities of the Cold War; in the last resort, even, his nip-and-tuck relationship with his professed, 'generalised' theme. The prevailing social weather sometimes gets domed in, or rather out, while the particular analysis of a film-maker or a film proceeds under the sort of hermetic auspices the author distrusts when promoted by a Langlois or a Malraux. But how, in the name of all that's holey – i.e. the film strip – should it or could it be otherwise? Nature may abhor a vacuum: here and there, an artist manages to thrive in one; or, more realistically, in a world as near as dammit of his private contriving.

Imagine, if you dare, the abominable Warhol before he came into physical being, given that he really did and has. This is where John Russell Taylor's *Directors and Directions* (or Fairly New Faces of the Seventies: Chabrol, Pasolini, Anderson, Kubrick, Warhol/Morrissey, Satyajit Ray, Jancsó and Makavejev) ought to be brought into the argument. Mr Taylor can generally be relied upon to supply intelligible plot-synopses at what sounds like dictation speed and does so here, only more so. But what conceivable connection, I hear you cry, may there be between Kubrick and Jancsó, Ray and Warhol/Morrissey? Well, Mr Taylor has an answer for that:

> I see the artist's battle as being primarily to keep himself to himself, to ignore (and be allowed to ignore) what is going on around him, to explore his own personality and preoccupations with a minimum of outside interference.

Hence his choice, which continues to bewilder me to distraction. But it is not its wilfulness that is our closing concern: it is rather its corrective utility. Set the evaluations, characterised by an eerily perverse sensitivity, herein allowed house-room against the respective observations of Messrs Rhode and Thomson – and permit the latter the absolute last word: 'We all see slightly different films in the cinema.' QED.

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Philip French

Lost Tycoons

The MGM Story by JOHN DOUGLAS EAMES
Octopus Books £5.95
Mayer and Thalberg by SAMUEL MARX
W. H. Allen £5.50

Twenty years ago there were very few books on the cinema. Today they pour out in incontinent profusion, and a leading publisher of movie books told me recently that he thought Gresham's Law was at work, with the good ones being driven off the bookshop shelves and the review pages by the inferior majority. Indicative of this change is the appearance of the two books under review and the absence from the British scene of two important books by Bosley Crowther, the longtime film critic of the *New York Times*: *The Lion's Share* (1957), a sober account of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer story which was the first major history of a Hollywood studio, and the first major biography of a movie mogul, *Hollywood Rajah* (1960), an unsentimental life of Louis B. Mayer, the man who superintended the fortunes of MGM from 1924 until the early Fifties. At the time no British publisher was interested in either, and had they appeared here no literary editor would have accorded them the attention given to (say) the Unilever story or a biography of Henry Ford.

John Douglas Eames's *The MGM Story* is an outsize volume covering all 1,705 movies produced by MGM between 1924 and 1974 with a photograph, some credits and a few glib (and sometimes crass) lines on each. Eames worked for MGM for 38 years, though in what capacity we are not told, and so watched its sad transformation from the most glamorous of the big eight Hollywood companies to what it now is – a minor film-producing outfit attached to a large Las Vegas casino-hotel. His book might be called a useful appendix to Crowther's history, and there would be worse ways of spending half-an-hour sheltering from a rainstorm than browsing through this particular volume in W. H. Smith's.

Samuel Marx also worked for MGM as a story editor and producer, having been invited out to Hollywood in 1930 by Irving Thalberg himself, with whom he formed a friendship just after World War Two when they were both employed as office boys at Universal Pictures' headquarters in New York. He was thus in a position to observe at close quarters the legendary partnership between the studio boss and Thalberg, his 'boy wonder' chief exectuive, during a crucial stage in the company's history. Yet Marx has curiously little to add to what we already know about this pair – Mayer, the ruthless Jewish immigrant fighting his way to the top from his Boston scrap merchant's yard; Thalberg, the sickly son of genteel immigrant parents, destined for an early grave in 1936. The flair and wheedling diplomacy of Mayer and the acute commercial sensibility and strategic command of Thalberg made for a formidable, if often uneasy, partnership. By and large they united to fight off the front-office men in New York in the interests of superior popular movie-making. It is good, however, to be reminded by Marx that Thalberg was as obsessed by money as Mayer, and by Eames that while the general standard of MGM movies perhaps declined after Thalberg's death, the majority of the studio's finest pictures – and above all the musicals – came after 1936. And everyone ought to be made aware that Mayer was something more than the comic villain of Lillian Ross's *Picture* and that Irving Thalberg was something less than the tragic hero of Scott Fitzgerald's *The Last Tycoon*.

Marx does add a few new details to the vast Hollywood mural that his and other such books are creating (as a countervailing force perhaps to Tod Hackett's 'The Burning of Los Angeles' in *Day of the Locust*). They're mostly of a lubricious character and not all entirely credible. For instance, in what the publishers claim as the book's key revelation we're told that Jean Harlow's husband, the producer Paul Bern, committed suicide not because of his impotence but in order to protect Jean and MGM from the scandal of his bigamous marriage. How has Marx kept this to himself all these years? There are, too, a few amusing lines, and these ring true. Joseph Mankiewicz, for example, is quoted as saying of the nickelodeon pianist Sam Katz: 'Nobody can be as happy to see anybody as Sam Katz is to see everybody.' And one can believe that Joan Crawford paid the lecherous Mayer the ultimate compliment of saying that when she put her arms around his neck in supplicatory fashion, 'he never once touched my boobs or pinched my butt'.

Sadly, where one might have expected Marx to offer fresh material – on the operation of the script department at MGM – we learn little of value. He tells us that Lillian Hellman worked there briefly as a script-reader; that a drunken Fitzgerald telephoned one night for Thalberg's private number to offer Metro the screen-rights on *Tender is the Night*: that Thomas Wolfe called one day, turned down Marx's offer of a lucrative contract, got an introduction to

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Harlow and spent the night with her. What he doesn't tell us is what life was really like in the writers' block, and how things moved from script to screen when, in the words of *Fortune*, 'more members of the literati worked under him than it took to produce the King James Version of the Bible'. Even after several decades of labouring in the MGM vineyards, Marx has nothing to match that chilling passage in *The Last Tycoon* when Fitzgerald's Thalberg-figure, Monroe Stahr, presents the department to a visiting aristocrat:

> 'We have all sorts of people – disappointed poets, one-hit playwrights, college girls – we put them on an idea in pairs, and if it slows down, we put two more writers working behind them. I've had as many as three pairs working independently on the same idea.'
>
> 'Do they like it?'
>
> 'Not if they know about it. They're not geniuses – none of them could make as much any other way.'

Martin Amis

Soft Cor

Erotic Movies by RICHARD WORTLEY *Studio Vista* £3.50

Life Goes to the Movies *Time Life Books* £9.95

Unluckily for the compilers of such albums as *Erotic Movies*, the history of sex in the cinema is essentially the same thing as the history of censorship in the cinema: the continuing story of how much you're allowed to see. It's a survey that has been done many times by now and even when Richard Wortley is trying to vary it his gambits seem sorrily jaded – the academico-anthropological throat-clearing ('Erotic, from the Greek *erotikos*' is how the book begins), the attempt to dodge chronology by passing eras off as themes ('To Kiss . . . and so to Bed' and 'The Great Outdoors' are two of its chapter-headings) and the quickly abandoned claim that all kinds of odd things can be sexy (those of a 'poetic strain', for instance, go for such items as 'the smooth ardour of an armpit' and 'the hair as curtain to the soul'). With these formalities out of the way, *Erotic Movies* settles down to the usual gloating chronicle, from the time of the first tentative handclasp to the present day, when the right to pay money to watch people going to bed together is established as inalienable. Mr Wortley has put together a conscientious Horlicks-table book, and the subject is of course timelessly gripping.

The emancipation of the cinema was an unsteady, wavering process, going through at least three distinct phases. It started, I suppose, when the first accredited screen kiss took place in Edison's 1896 film ('absolutely disgusting' one critic found it) called, sensibly enough, *The Kiss* – though *The Peck* might have been a franker title f Mr Wortley's still shows the extent of he clinch: in the most decorous manner possible, John C. Rice seems to be trying to put his moustache up May Irwin's nose. For the time being, kisses got longer and slightly more passionate, but with an implicit 'no tongues' proviso. The marathon snog between John Barrymore and Dolores Costello in *The Sea Beast* (1925) was in fact the result of four separate takes; to publicise the film Warner Brothers put it about that Dolores had fainted in the middle of shooting. For during the Twenties things were getting considerably sexier, with nipples and buttocks aplenty on view in decadence-films like *The End of the World*, in the Doric orgy-scenes of the epics, and in the grisly German 'Kulturfilmen' like *Ways to Health and Beauty*. Yet pressure was mounting, not only from the censors but from the American public at large. In the end, the industry chose to be self-contracepting, and in 1929 the Motion Picture Production Code, one of the funniest documents ever put together, was drafted.

Despite its imprecisions and hypocrisies – and despite minor revisions and the odd European blackleg – the Code was observed with obsequious care for three decades. Kisses had to be planted firmly on the lips, eschewing neck, ears and throat; no flesh should be visible between ladies' stocking-tops and underwear; ethnic breasts were passed as unsexy, precipitating a flood of jungly potboilers; everyone had to sleep in twin beds; screen prostitutes were never to be shown having a good time (Mr Wortley includes a nice still of a wrecked hussy being frowned at by men in white coats); in boudoir scenes, actors were obliged to keep one foot on the carpet at all times (hence also the many stills of hernia-bent Romeos); broad, cripes, finger, lousy and travelling salesman were some of the words on the Code blacklist.

This meant, more or less, that film-makers had to find relatively chaste ways of being sexy, often with very pleasing results. Mr Wortley subscribes to that twinkly old line about sensuality being intensified by restraint, and the view gets a lot of support from the Code-period illustrations in *Erotic Movies*, before celluloid sex had come to equal mere athleticism. The petticoated Joan Crawford, surprised in a dressing-room by her co-star, has a lot more allure than the sight of spiked chains being affixed to Anne Heywood's breasts; Clara Bow and Minna Gombell sharing a cot in 1933 is somehow far more stirring than the tensionless lesbianising of *Emmannuelle*: and Marilyn Monroe's pre-kiss glaze is everlastingly preferable to Linda Lovelace's ravenous gawp. As Mr Wortley fairly typically points out, 'one lady's deep throat may be another's great big yawn'.

What Mr Wortley never points out, though – perhaps in a bid to preserve the book's wide-spectrum appeal – is the unstable (and surely narrowing) gap between sex in the circuit cinemas and sex in the toss-houses. He knows the latter exist and occasionally refers to their products, but after the survey of the trailblazing films of the past ten years his book fizzles out cluelessly, with a lone resentful mention of 'beaver shots' in the final sentence. What is happening to sex in the cinema? Regular browsers through visual-aid glossies like *Penthouse* and *Playboy* will be aware that the taboos are being shed with remarkable

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ease: having been stuck on the breast-barrier for decades, the mags have advanced to whopping spread-leg spectaculars (previously found in specialist purchases only) in the course of two or three years. Will the gap between the Odeon and the Cameo Moulin contract too? While the overground was squawking about *Last Tango* (1972), American mack-owners were already enjoying *Deep Throat*, but the difference between *Emmannuelle* and, say, *Don't Get Your Knickers in a Twist* is decidedly less pronounced. This, like so much else, fails to come under Mr Wortley's purview, which is as self-censoring as the Hollywood Code.

There are few sex-problems in *Life Goes to the Movies*, despite the oozy tooting of the introduction:

> This book is about a magazine's love affair with an industry. From the start, *Life* and the movies were hooked on each other . . . Through the years we had an absolutely wonderful time together.

The skimpy text is all like this, by turns sycophantic and condescending. The photographs, of course, are plentiful, lavish and invariably fascinating – heady effluvia from the dream factory.

Films and the Second World War

ROGER MANVELL

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DENT

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by Eric Lax

Elm Tree Books £3.75

Penelope Houston

Dreamlined

America in the Movies by MICHAEL WOOD *Secker & Warburg* £5.00
Deeper Into Movies by PAULINE KAEL *Calder & Boyars* £6.95

Although the books about movies are silting upon the shelves, there aren't many around that actually seem designed for reading. On the one hand, the structuralist and semiological tracts favour a style about as involved and enticing as a missive from the Inland Revenue: 'The communicational model set up by the relation between narrator and narratee is that of "Jeb tells a story to Thorley" ' remains one of my favourites in this line. On the other, interminable collections of movie star photographs, lightly glued together with plot synopses, roll off the nostalgia assembly line. One awaits, and doubtless not in vain, *The Films of Paul Henreid* or *Ann Blyth: a Portrait.*

So part of the attraction of Michael Wood's *America in the Movies* is that it assumes an easy relationship with the reader, moves forward tolerably diffident assertions like non-aggressive pawns rather than clobbering us with polysyllabic banality. Mr Wood has, of course, a thesis, and a slightly dubious one. 'The coherent world of the movies,' he suggests, really took shape around 1939 and began to collapse in the early Sixties; roughly and conveniently, it takes him from the high noon of *Gone With the Wind* to the jaded dusk of the Burton-Taylor *Cleopatra*. 'Those are the decades of my own innocent attendance at the movies,' he ingenuously adds; and one might have guessed it. Behind the sophisticate in this game, there's usually a child filmgoer equating some lost golden age with the days when he had to be escorted in to 'A' pictures.

Still, if one wants to fix arbitrary time limits the Forties and Fifties will do; and certainly for Mr Wood's general argument, which sees the art of Hollywood as one of stylish excess, and suggests that 'the movies did not describe or explore America, they invented it, dreamed up an America all their own, and persuaded us to share the dream'. Others – Mr Wood quotes them by the score – have followed the same route, homing in on the same emblems (Bogart crouched over the café table in *Casablanca*, Rita Hayworth putting the blame on Mame in *Gilda*, Cary Grant bearing that suspect glass of milk to Joan Fontaine in *Suspicion*) to pursue the mirror reflections of myth.

Specifically, Mr Wood glances at a series of familiar suppositions: 'that loneliness is glorious, that women are carnivorous, that nice guys finish last, that appearances are suspicious, that the lynched man is always innocent', and so on. Since this isn't history but a kind of essayist's embrace of a subject, he can pick where he pleases to make his points; and the pleasure of reading him – and this is, in a quiet, slightly etiolated way, a pleasurable book – is in the relevance of a series of side issues. He's engaging on the scenery of fear in the *film noir* ('nothing that happens *in* the films quite lives up to the eerie menace contained in the looks of these movies'); on the shifty behaviour of clues in films, always doing vanishing tricks just as the image itself can be snatched off the screen; on the vagaries of Hollywood liberals, and the wonderfully smooth way all problems (race or drink or crime) merge into the Problem; on the translation in the musical from effortless Astaire to hard-pushing Gene Kelly. All this, too, is laced with nostalgia; easy stuff, and like that black bird in *The Maltese Falcon*, dreams are made of it.

Pauline Kael's *Deeper Into Movies* is sterner and sharper. Miss Kael reviews movies in the winter for the *New Yorker* (Penelope Gilliatt does the summer duty turn) and this long and mostly wintry book is a front-line report on only three seasons, 1969 to 1972, snatched, as they used to say in the old-style police procedurals, from the *New Yorker* files. On 23 January 1971, front-line morale was very low, with Miss Kael noting that 'I didn't write a column last week because the new movies defeated me' – this from the medium's least tongue-tied observer. By 25 March 1972, she's waving from the trenches: 'this has been a legendary period in movies,' she says, startlingly naming *Fiddler on the Roof* among the legend-makers.

1971 was perhaps the year in which Hollywood began to get back its confidence though hardly to that extent. Any weekly reviewer who has managed to get through the Seventies without visible marks of battle fatigue, however, is either an infatuated neophyte or hardened beyond recall; and Miss Kael, who is of course neither, works at a level of engagement where the wounds show. Much of this collection reflects, in writing which can be witty, penetrating, aggrieved, shrill, hectoring, obstinate, the writer's apprehensions about where movies are moving. She despises the pandering-to-youth movies, the new puritanism of the Left' ('any work that is enjoyable is said to be counter-revolutionary'), the banality of violence, the boredom of instant-mix excitement, the fraudulent exploitation movies and the numbingly depressed ones:

> We're developing a beat me for everything bad that's ever happened kind of serious movie that drowns the audience in helpless misery and is turning *us* into nuts.

Miss Kael laying about her week after week across all those generous *New Yorker* column inches is a fine sight (no British regular gets this kind of space; one of several reasons why no British regular gathers his reviews in triennial bundles). When she's finished with films like Kazan's *The Arrangement* ('in movies, the worst sell-out has always been thinking big'), V

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conti's *The Damned* ('I have rarely seen a picture I enjoyed less'), Ken Russell's *The Music Lovers* ('Russell's damn panache makes *everything* shameful and unclean'), Cassavetes's *Husbands* ('We wonder if the actress could ever get enough money to compensate for what is being done to her'), you almost begin to feel sorry for the picture, whimpering in its corner. But Miss Kael's bark has always been better than her bite; it's the ability to keep up the moral pressure, even when casting herself in the always ungrateful role of scold, that makes this perhaps her best book. Not necessarily deeper into movies, but alertly on to them .

George Melly

Period Pieces

Humphrey Bogart by NATHANIEL BENCHLEY *Hutchinson* £4.95
Bogart and Bacall: A Love Story by JOE HYAMS *Michael Joseph* £4.25
A Very Private Person: Ronald Colman by JULIET BENITA COLMAN *W. H. Allen* £3.95
Shirley Temple by ROBERT WINDELER *W. H. Allen* £3.50

Two books on Bogart, both containing many of the same anecdotes and confirming each other's general view of the man. Which to favour is therefore very much a question of taste. For 70p more for Nathaniel Benchley you get a bigger collection of photographs and a superior example of book production, but the tone is frequently of relentless frivolity. Some may prefer this to Joe Hyams's show-biz sentimentality. It is typical of the difference between them that when Benchley feels obliged to tell an anecdote involving himself, he apologises so emphatically as to become irritating. Hyams feels no such inhibition, but this welcome lack of coyness is more than wiped out by a frightful literary device to excuse the book's subtitle. As there was a 25-year difference between Bogart and Bacall the author drags her into the first third of his book by means of cross-cutting:

> One can only speculate on what would have happened had Humphrey been walking on 103rd Street in 1924 and seen a baby being wheeled in a carriage and had been told that some 19 years later the infant would become his wife.

Pure Beachcomber!

As to what made Bogie tick, both are evenly informative: the WASP who became the prototype tough guy; the arch needler who just avoided physical violence at the last moment; the heavy drinker who seldom showed it; the four-time married puritan; the man who died with stoic dignity. You pays your money . . . Personally I'd settle for Benchley because he suggests not only what Bogart was, but also why his myth persists. Why is it that during the last decade many young people, most of whom he would have disapproved of, find in his film image someone they can identify with – the outsider whose cynicism stops short of corruption?

While there is something resistible about her, Bacall comes out more sympathetically in the Benchley version despite Hyams's subtitle; but his previous wife, Mayo Methot, a pathetic, violent, self-destructive drunk, shows, in both books, how well Bogart could behave under extreme provocation. Finally, however, what really counts about the man is his work. His attitude towards acting was completely professional; the magic was a bonus. Benchley is far more perceptive about the actor than Hyams is.

Both Hyams and Benchley are clear pros. Juliet Benita Colman is obviously not, but this in no way mars her voyage around her father; rather the contrary. Colman was already 53 when she was born and she was only 14 when he died, so she had a great deal to find out, most of his films to see, and a lot of people to talk to. Like Bogart, Colman began as a stage actor who went into films almost against his will, but whereas Bogie still seems a contemporary figure, Colman's looks, voice and mannerisms, the Kiplingesque code, a blend of mysticism and duty, are very much of their period. He was, as Miss Colman recognises, a very private person and, after an unfortunate marriage to a jealous hysteric not unlike Bogart's Mayo, settled down to a somewhat staid Hollywood life in which a great deal of tennis provided the principal excitement.

Robert Windeler's relationship with Shirley Temple is initially wary: 'I don't necessarily endorse her politics or other philosophical positions . . .,' he writes in his introduction, but it's evident that, as he began his research, an exercise in restrained camp gave way to a certain admiration. Almost my contemporary, her films infatuated me as a child and I am still, however sardonically, in thrall. Young Mr Windeler is under no such critical disability. Both he, and Mrs Shirley Temple Black herself, look on them as pretty worthless.

After failing as a teenage actress and following her second and happy marriage to Mr Charles Black, Shirley moved into the world. The essence of the straight, Mrs Middle America personified, she supported such dubious figures as Nixon and Spiro Agnew, but what does become clear is that she believed in what they said they stood for, and can in no way be accused of condoning the goings on under the bland surface. At first a laughing stock at the UN, she won through to respect. In Ghana she made a triumphant Ambassadress. Her decision to make her operation for breast cancer public knowledge was both courageous and helpful.

Nevertheless, for all of us approaching 50, it's the earlier chapters which make the book a must:

> . . . singing, dancing, shaking the finger, bowing the mouth to actually say something – like 'oh my goodness' – and above all dimpling. And no one did any of those things better or more appealingly than Shirley.

Nor more ambiguously either; the analysis of which aspect helped curtail the career, as a film critic, of Mr Graham Greene.

That's entertainment

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David Wilson

Days of Hope

The Rise and Fall of British Documentary by ELIZABETH SUSSEX *University of California Press* £6.50

The myth of the British documentary film movement is that it was a golden age of creative collaboration, when individual talents (and they included Auden and Britten as well as Cavalcanti and Humphrey Jennings) were harnessed to a common end. It was an aesthetic movement with a social purpose, the British heir to the Russian revolutionary tradition. It was amateur in the best sense of the word, but professionally iconoclastic. 'I look upon cinema as a pulpit, and use it as a propagandist,' said John Grierson, the movement's founding father and guiding spirit: in the early Thirties, when the British cinema's version of the working class was comic butlers and Cockney cab drivers, this was the documentarists' common creed.

Elizabeth Sussex has attempted to redress the balance between the authorised version of the myth and what really happened. Her book (to be published here in the spring) is a composite history, made up of long interviews with most of the leading lights, which she has edited to form a chronological record of the documentary movement from its early days to its wartime peak and its disintegration after the war. This patchwork history is stitched together by Mrs Sussex's own factual and evaluative comments. The method, reflecting Grierson's definition of documentary as 'the creative treatment of actuality', has its disadvantages: inevitable repetitions, memory sometimes blurred by hindsight. But on the whole it works, not least because the filmmakers are good talkers.

The early days are recalled with what sounds like an authentic mix of affection and disenchantment. The first films clearly owed more to enthusiasm than to expertise; as Harry Watt characteristically describes them, 'basically an intellectual exercise carried out by a bunch of half-baked and inexperienced amateurs'. Edgar Anstey remembers being sent off to Labrador to make a film, his only previous experience being half a day filming statues (from a low angle, in the Russian manner) in St James's Park. The real value of Mrs Sussex's book is not only that it sheds new light on what was thought to be familiar territory (the experiment with sound, Grierson's way with sponsors, the argument between the aesthetes and the propagandists), but that it provides the definitive account of the aspirations and the failures of the movement as well as its actual achievements. But out of it, in time, came pioneering films like *Housing Problems*, audio-visual experiments like *Night Mail*, the wartime films of Humphrey Jennings: all of which are here subjected to rigorous and by no means uncritical analysis by some of the people involved in their making.

Grierson himself, in what was probably his last interview, ebulliently rehearses the theory and the ambitions, including his hope that 'film could be turned into an instrument of the working class' (in fact, the early documentaries tended to be more concerned with ennobling work than attacking working conditions). Ironically, it was the 1945 Labour victory which saw the beginning of the end. The documentarists had been used to dealing with the relatively enlightened sponsorship of such as the Empire Marketing Board and the Post Office. The lumbering juggernaut of postwar bureaucracy was something they couldn't cope with.

Among this week's contributors:

P. P. STREETEN is Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies; his publications include *Trade Strategies for Development* (1974).

C. H. ROLPH's next book, a 'legal fantasy' called *A Week in the Life of an Ignorant Man*, will be published by Oxford early next year.

Eric Rhode

Imperialist

Alexander Korda by KAROL KULIK *W. H. Allen* £5.95

In his diary, Robert Bruce Lockhart referred to Alexander Korda as 'a crook and, according to Bayliss Smith, an evil man'. Karol Kulik's carefully researched biography goes some way in pointing out why Korda aroused such hatred. He was, if not a crook, at least a willing student of Hollywood's sharper practices and adept at putting them to use. Like Pied Piper, he managed to lead the City into investing, and losing, millions of pounds on films – with the consequence that many business corporations were deterred from further investment in the movie industry. Moreover, he presented British life as a succession of stereotypes, about as true to experience as a tourist brochure.

It is possible Korda half-believed this country to be as quaint or glamorous as he showed it to be; yet at moments even his vaunted anglophilia had a hollow ring about it: as when he praised the English for their snobbery, or took flight for Hollywood at the outbreak of war. (He did not return until 1942.) Around this time J. B. Priestley grumbled about the *London Can Take It* sort of film, 'full of Dukes and toothless coster-mongers', and produced by fellows who had hared across the Atlantic. A few years earlier Graham Greene had pronounced, 'We have saved the English film industry from American competition only to surrender it to a far more alien control.'

Karol Kulik puts up a strong case against most of these charges. Korda left England in 1940, in part because he was acting as a secret agent for Churchill. Far from being an appeaser, he had subsidised Churchill during the years in the wilderness. The evidence suggests that he cannot be held accountable for the collapse of the British film industry in 1937. Karol Kulik is tempted to conclude that Korda was 'for 25 years the most imaginative and courageous man to work in the British film industry' – which is surely to undervalue the achievement of Michael Balcon. Even so, Korda did bring a verve and a feeling for presentation that energised the British film scene.

Later he was to draw some fine screenplays from his former critic Graham Greene – incidentally, Greene and Orson Welles created Harry Lime, but how far does Lime's charm derive from Korda? – and Miss Kulik thinks the time has come for a favourable reappraisal of such productions as *Elephant Boy, Knight without Armour, Four Feathers* and *Perfect Strangers*. (She has arranged a mammoth Korda season at the National Film Theatre beginning on 9 February, to test out this contention.) Korda was erudite, often generous, immeasurably charming – and even his enemies conceded that he had the authority of a prince.

Why is it so hard, then, to reconcile these conflicting views? Miss Kulik has dug up some fascinating information about his upbringing in Hungary. Korda supported the Communist regime of Bela Kun – and indeed, as a government adviser, he proposed that the Hungarian film companies should be nationalised. Yet at this time he and his wife were leading figures in Hungarian café society. Later, in exile, the Kordas 'affected a grandiose life style which they could ill afford; they hired fancy chauffeur-driven cars and lived in the best hotels'. Korda almost declined to go to Hollywood because, he claimed, 'In Vienna I lived in the Imperial, ate at Sacher's and had my suits made at Knize's. Can I do that in Hollywood as well?'

On hearing this, you may think he would have made the perfect subject for a glamorous Korda film romance; yet such a thought does him an injustice. He represented rather the kind of emigré who managed to sustain a fairy-tale dream, but only for a while. In 1930, in Berlin, a virtually destitute after the disasters of the Hollywood years, Korda had the nerve to announce to his friends that he would return to England and build a great 'studio town' there: within six years he had realised this well-nigh impossible dream.

Miss Kulik tells us how he did so without making him any the less elusive. Korda was canny about keeping his own privacy: he arranged that most of his papers should be destroyed at the time of his death. His friends and relatives have been noticeably discreet when speaking to his biographer. But this does not quite account for the unease of Miss Kulik's writing when she speculates on Korda's more intimate moments, especially on his relationship with the beautiful Merle Oberon (to whom she is harsh). Perhaps she wants to know more about something of which there is no more to know. In middle age Korda, we are told, became 'silkily gray'. For all his flamboyant 'artistic' temperament, it would seem he intended to hide behind the impersonality of the businessman. It may be that, in the end, he became this impersonality.

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Films

John Coleman

Look Who's Talking

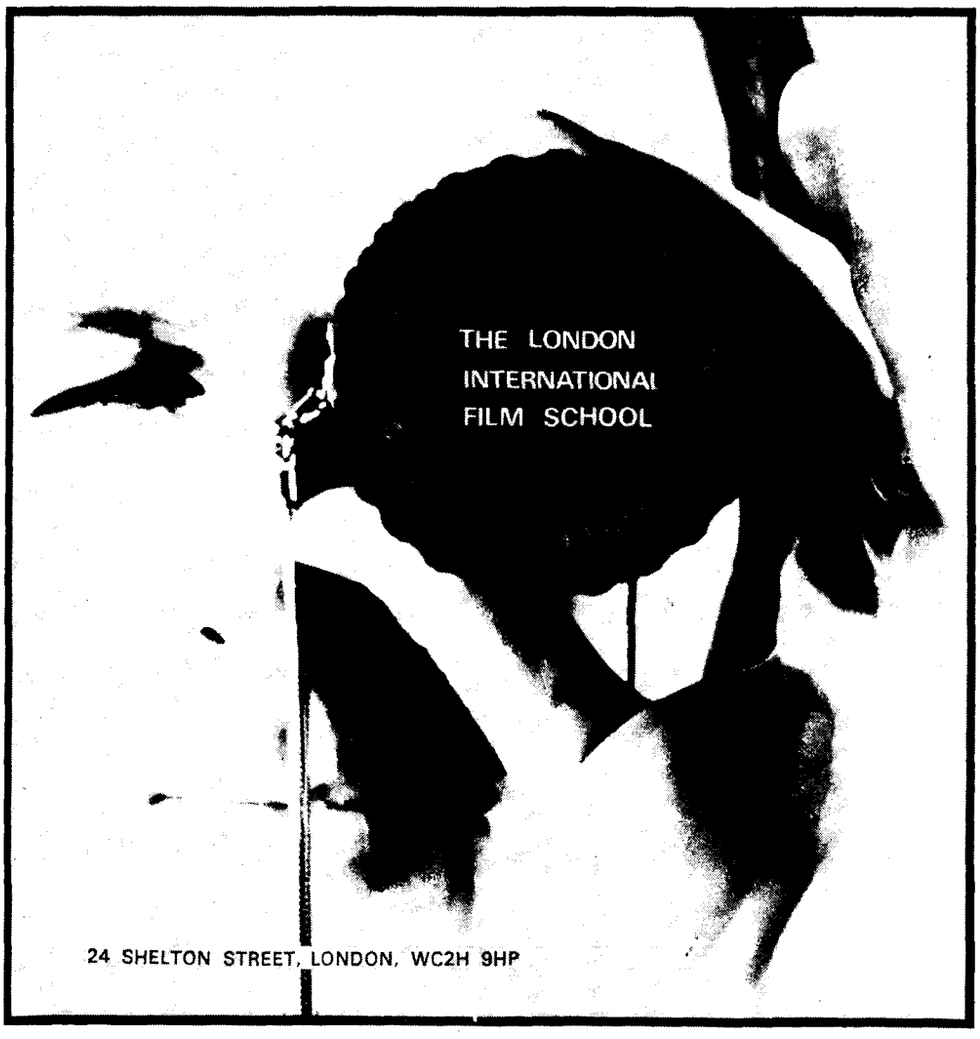
Conversation Piece *Curzon*
The Killer Elite *Dominion*
Man Friday *Carlton*
The Sparrow of Pigalle *Gala Royal; Continentale*

Once upon a time – and how long ago it now seems – there was an Italian director of some stature called Luchino Visconti, an aristocrat of Marxist leanings. Where is he now? My last pleasant memory of his work relates to parts of *The Leopard* and the more I return to that film the stronger grows the impression that the unlikely casting of Burt Lancaster as the Prince was a masterstroke. I see my review, back in December 1963, refers to his special blend of physical magnificence and delicacy: he can be expert at the submerged wince, as when he was there invited to down a glass of cheap spirits; he also contrived to suggest intimations of mortality while straying through the chattering, ornate rooms of a crowded ball. All too probably Visconti, now 70 and not long recovered from a serious illness, remembered this performance as well when setting out on his latest project, *Conversation Piece*: for the central character, the ageing Professor (who could well carry hints of a self-portrait of his creator), has – as written by Visconti and his collaborators Suso Cecchi d'Amico and Enrico Medioli – clear affinities with that increasingly weary Prince. And so it is Mr Lancaster once again, with that pent, waiting power of one of life's solitaries (it may be just the muscle-bound, jaw-tensed reminiscence of an ex-acrobat's moment of stillness before the challenge of a trapeze, but one doubts it), who lends the gravitas of his presence to a Visconti film.

And never did a film more need it, because this must be as crass a construct from a reckoned director as one has squirmed through since, to keep it recent, Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon*. Nor is that fair to Kubrick: at least one could *see* his careful camera compositions; here Pasqualino de Santis's stylised groupings in the Professor's apartment, stuffed with books and family studies (the 'conversation pieces' of the title), are disgracefully fuzzy: this is a particular disaster since decor – the contrast between the Professor's den and the recklessly modernised flat upstairs (and one notable still-life shot of a great kitchen with sausages hanging from the ceiling, which momentarily imports a little much-desired warmth and humanity) – is all there is, or might have been, to cling on to. It is the objective correlative of a story utterly ruined by improbable plotting, operatic acting and unspeakable dialogue. Shortly, a rich, vulgar and imperious countess (swoopingly played by Silvana Mangano under alabaster make-up and with an unerring ear for the wrong stress) resolves to lease the reluctant Professor's upstairs rooms, there to install her equally pallid daughter and her daughter's boy friend, subsequently to make the refurbished nest over to her 'kept man', as she shoutingly – and correctly – terms that feckless blond beauty, Helmut Berger. This appalling quartet, who rejoice in bad manners, worse language and confused politics, get mama's way, up to a point, presumably tenderise the eremitic Prof by introducing him into their sordid squabbles and traffickings, sexual and otherwise, then abandon him on what is probably his death-bed after equivocal Berger has killed himself – or been killed by – an exploding oven upstairs.

Messages could be hauled out of this gallimaufry, but I prefer to cherish the dubbed dialogue, from which I quote without excuses. Its prime ineptness must come when Lancaster addresses the daughter, the only other actor to possess an American accent: 'It's just as if we spoke two different languages.' Berger has some great stuff. Leaning back and chatting through a record, he soulfully offers, 'I love Mozart'; explaining his current downfall to gigolo status, he talks of '68: 'I threw myself into the student movement . . . deeper than most'; after a temporary setback with his benefactress, he picks up the Prof's phone for the umpteenth time – 'Is St Moritz still on for tomorrow?' Oh, these are the beautiful people, all right. They have their cool. After his death, the countess murmurs her version of *eheu, fugaces*: 'Gureef eez preecarious.' And how poor Lancaster must have gritted his teeth while displaying his portraits: 'For a long while I favoured the Sitwell family.' Pause. 'I even took them into my bedroom.' Last boob of all: Lancaster may be sixtyish in real life and is steadily presented as some sort of decrepit Rome-based E. M. Forster, but the dear, damned man has tended himself so well he unfortunately looks an excellently preserved middle-aged catch.

Sam Peckinpah is another film-maker to bask in a reputation hardly justified by his last few outings. *The Killer Elite*, though San Francisco-based, is as usual shallowly infiltrated by Peckinpah's version of the code of the West: and it is *full* of spelt-out messages: 'You all look alike, you young mercenaries, no matter what the country', 'Would you believe that heroism has become old-fashioned?', 'You're so busy doing your dirty work you can't tell who the bad guys really are'. Near the end, there are actually two or three set-speeches about such wretched facts of modern existence as that governments don't give a shit for civilians, everyone's crooked (except for the odd fellow who persists in doing what a fellow has to do – mostly shooting up the other fellow as maimingly as possible), and the like – or dislike. For Peckinpah's dislike, or at the



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kindest distrust, of practically everyone comes further out into the open with each film he produces. Sterling Silliphant's screenplay, Marc Norman (?) collaborating, brutally echoes this misanthropy. James Caan, with a couple of smashed limbs in metal scaffolding, is assured, 'That leg of yours will never be anything but a wet noodle'.

But I anticipate. The plot slaloms around a pair of toughies (Mr Caan and Robert Duvall) who do dirty work for the CIA, cunningly not *the* CIA but a rather similar outfit known as Communications Integrity Associates. Very early on, Mr Duvall double-crosses Mr Caan, his 'buddy', killing the political informer they are supposed to be protecting and putting bullets in Caan's knee-cap and arm. Up to this foulness, there was a casual expertise about everything – the joshing of Duvall and Caan, the editing, the vertiginous photography – that augured for reasonable excitement. No such luck: there follows a long, somehow relished stretch during which our shot-up hero sets determinedly out to rehabilitate himself. We watch the stitches being removed, the jolly thingified nurse being goosed (anyway, verbally) in the highest and finest traditions of machismo, the first tentative steps on crutches, a fall in a restaurant: and, deep down in us, we know all along that Caan is going to make it. His left side may be virtually useless in the world's eyes, and certainly the bloodshot ones of his bosses ('Don't drop around the shop'), but when our man starts taking lessons in Kung Fu he's not just whistling Dixie. And, lo and behold, the chance for him to prove himself arrives.

Duvall, gone irrevocably over to the other side, is out to get an inscrutable oriental who wishes to return to the Chinese mainland and tell a few suicidal home or, more properly abroad, truths. Caan is commissioned to protect this political kamikaze. In less time than it takes to move restlessly from one buttock to the other in one's seat, he has started recruiting: a fat, fearless ace driver and car mechanic and a psychotic sniper (whose mental illness, though often referred to, is barely in evidence: in fact, it is he who saves Caan's life later by rifling down Duvall, receiving a slap on the jaw for his pains – once a buddy, always a buddy, one hazards). Via the ensuing action, and there is aplenty, it emerges that all is not sweet or sound between the men who have taken Caan back on the payroll. But interest had fled away some reels before and a last choreography of violence did nothing to relieve an overpowering feeling of disgust.

Jack Gold's *Man Friday* is most considerately thought of as a botched comedy. Adrian Mitchell's script veers from the inane to the ridiculous, having Peter O'Toole's Crusoe as some kind of ex-public school castaway, given to prefectorial bossiness, bouts of religiosity, blubbing after singing a Shakespeherian song, and devising a mini-Olympics to prove something or other to his eminently civilised Friday (Richard Rountree), the love-thy-neighbour 'savage'. The only element one could safely call non-simplistic in this extraordinary piece, shot theatrically in Mexico, is a parrot, who seemed to have the few cynical, if repetitive, lines. As satire, this is all gums. *The Sparrow of Pigalle* is a fiction of Piaf's life up to her first triumph and, for the death of that inspired, tormented lady, I cannot imagine why it was made.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Sour Gripes

Treats *Royal Court*
Love's Old Sweet Song *Greenwich*
The Lady or the Tiger *Fortune*

The general criticism of *Treats* is that Christopher Hampton has written a private play when, as a responsible Royal Court dramatist, he should have written a public one. The distant sound of some unspecified demonstrators bawling 'murderer' at the Home Secretary wafts dreamily through the apartment windows at one point; but it scarcely ruffles the characters' ears, let alone their lives, which seem mainly devoted to eating, drinking, going to the office, coming back, listening to records, jumping into each other's beds, and upsetting one another, just like 80 or 90 per cent of the young, educated and unmarried population of London. This, it appears, is bad. Well, I recall aiming some such objection myself at Mr Hampton's *Philanthropist*, which began with news of half the cabinet being slaughtered by a gun-happy fanatic in the Strangers' Gallery and then proceeded to ignore this not wholly meaningless event. But the gods punish us by granting our desires, as Mr Hampton went on to prove in a novel way: he actually punished the gods, not to mention the circle and stalls, with something called *Savages*. This desultory exposé of the plight of the Brazilian Indians – represented by a few tanned thespians gleefully hopping over some painted logs – seemed to prove decisively that Mr Hampton had not the political acuity, the crusading zeal, the imaginative verve, the sheer *energy* of the dedicated public dramatist.

So it is no more sensible to blame him for writing about personal relationships than it would be to attack Pinter's *No Man's Land* for not being a searing study of the first world war or Simon Gray's *Otherwise Engaged* for failing to denounce the incompetence of the Post Office. *Treats* is a private play; there's a place for private plays as long as there are private people; and the only reasonable question is, is it any good? But before answering this, or (rather) by way of answering it, let me tell you roughly what happens on Andrew Sanders's anonymous inner-London set. Jane Asher locks the door against the sly and disagreeable James Bolam, playing her lover of two years, and shacks up with Stephen Moore, who is the mild-mannered office bore. Mr Bolam breaks in, bashes Mr Moore on the nose, and is sent packing by Miss Asher. Strangely, this does not prevent Moore bailing out Bolam when (equally inexplicably) the police find him snoozing in a coffin in an undertaker's yard nor does it deter him from inviting the derisive, destructive monster to dinner *à trois* in the flat. Miss Asher, thus offered the opportunity to choose between man and mouse, chucks out Moore and, after some ritual anguish, takes back the horrible Bolam. The play ends with her shrieking 'get out', 'eff off' or somesuch at Mr Moore as he makes an uncharacteristically direct attempt to recapture his territory.

Sorry if I've given away too much plot; but I can't believe it greatly matters. It does not take a professional sceptic like myself to sniff out the implausibilities forced on Mr Hampton by the need to bring incompatible people into one room. Is it really credible that a sane male would invite his sexual rival to hobnob over chops and wine with the joint object of their passion, especially when the man has violently assaulted him and viciously abused her, and the woman has consistently proclaimed her dislike and fear of him? Either he would have to be stupider than sin or saintlier than virtue itself and, though there's admittedly much of the good-humoured chump about Mr Moore, he fits neither extreme. Alternatively, his seeming fatuity could be a subtle, dark and possibly subconscious ploy to rid himself of a woman who threatened the security of his bachelorhood. But *Treats* simply doesn't operate on that level of human perception. Indeed, Mr Hampton even manages to botch a scene that any self-respecting comic dramatist could write with his toes, his teeth, or a blunt pencil protruding from his navel: that is, the one in which her first lover systematically provokes Miss Asher's contempt for her second one by mocking and manipulating him. Mr Bolam's wit is so uninspired at this point, his darts and stabs so half-hearted, his put-downs so resistible, his attempts at divide-and-rule so transparent, that Mr Moore seems to be deliberately committing emotional suicide by succumbing to them.

If you want some snoozy, undemanding amusement, *Treats* will serve as well as many another. You'll find Robert Kidd's direction unobjectionable and the acting often good – Mr Moore blinking vaguely over his moustache, Miss Asher looking pained and grim beneath her flowing auburn, Mr Bolam swaggering and sneering, a sexual hooligan in search of a killing. But if you want trenchancy combined with sensitivity, wisdom about relationships and concern for them, you had better look elsewhere. *Treats* strikes me as a shallow play, and an unattractive one, not least in its handling of the bright and pretty girl interpreter played by Miss Asher. Her male acquaintance, and therefore the emotional terrain open to her, seems to be confined to a sadist and a ninny, and she isn't self-sufficient enough to live without one or the other. So she opts for the former, dismissing the latter with all the cruelty at her command and flashing Mr Bolam a smirk of complicity that shocks even him. As male view of women, this is depressingly familiar – lay them, insult them, batter them, humiliate them, crush their minds and spirits and still they'll come back, eager for more. True, the character is an individual and one hostile case-study does not add up to a philosophy of sex. But I still sme

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something faintly rancid festering beneath the floorboards of *Treats*, and the name of that something is misogyny.

That smell becomes a pronounced stench in John Hale's *Love's Old Sweet Song*, though the disease afflicting its women is far removed from masochism. Indeed, the play casts Constance Chapman and Vivien Merchant as the most malign pair of testicle-twisters we've seen for years. Crunch, crunch go their nutcrackers, and snip, snip their genteel scissors, spreading misery among mankind, while the ladies themselves somehow maintain a reputation for selfless fortitude. So life will apparently continue, as mother indoctrinates daughter, generation after generation. This is a very repetitive play, more anxious to pulverise than explain its moral enemies; and yet the result is less objectionable than *Treats*, partly because the mistrust of women is more open, partly because there's an emotional seriousness about it one has to respect. Mr Hale, you feel, is lancing this boil because he has to: it is growing, and growing painfully big, somewhere inside his own head. All of which leaves me little stomach for *The Lady or the Tiger*, a musical set in a Gilbertian Ruritania, but without any of Gilbert's edge and bite. Arch is the unkind word for this fragile piece, with its skipping tunes; cute, the kindest I can muster. The question is this: if you love a man and can't have him, should you let him marry a notorious slut or feed him to a ravening tiger? Now, *there's* an everyday dilemma for you.

Music

Bayan Northcott

Take-Off

Ligeti: San Francisco Polyphony *Royal Festival Hall* and *Radio 3*

'Ripe for Pseuds' Corner,' responded one of my esteemed colleagues to György Ligeti's manic appearance on last week's BBC-1 *Omnibus*. The trouble is that Ligeti, with his delight in the absurd, might well agree. Worse still, some of his musical jokes are beginning to look a lot more promising for the musical future than the deadly serious formulations of many of his contemporaries. When the crushing of Hungary drove him westward in 1956, the European avant-garde was just facing the problem that totally serial music came out sounding totally random. And since it seemed that any note could go with any note, the general conclusion was that composers might as well use free-for-all methods in the first place. It took a musical mind of almost surreal common sense to see that the ultimate solution could only be the putting of *every* note together at once. The sequence of vast, inert note-clusters that comprises Ligeti's *Atmosphères* (1961) creates a paradoxical sense of emptiness, but a lambently suggestive emptiness – 'nothing that is not there and nothing that is' – thanks to Ligeti's exquisite ear for orchestral blendings.

His abiding aim since has been to condense that suggestiveness into ever more defined and vivid configurations of sound. *Lontano* (1967) was a striking advance in that the clusters not only clarify from time to time into translucent chords, but are also made to shimmer and pulsate by the device of continually transferring their notes between different instruments. In the Chamber Concerto (1970), the pulsations break out in a dozen contrasting accompaniment patterns – twitterings, bubblings, tickings – often entertainingly superimposed in cross-rhythms deriving from one of Ligeti's most Dadaistic experiments: the notorious *Poème symphonique* for 100 metronomes with which he deflected a pompous civic occasion in 1962. With *Melodien* (1971) long, lazy tendrils of something very like melody begin to float to the surface of its coruscating textures. Of course the reappearance of melody, accompaniment, chords, even the traditional symphony orchestra itself as though Ligeti had seemingly conjured them once more out of nothing, could be construed merely as cleverly disguised reaction. But he has clearly aimed at finding new relationships between traditional elements sufficient to release sounds of a genuine freshness and, not least important in these difficult musical days, approachability – and succeeded.

More recent works, such as *Clocks and Clouds* (1973), have shown a preoccupation with yet another refinement, the use of carefully placed out-of-tune notes to heighten the pungency of certain chords – 'like slightly off meat,' as Ligeti has put it in his own idiosyncratic way. His latest, however, reverts more to the concerns of *Melodien*. *San Francisco Polyphony*, commissioned by that city last year and first performed here a week ago by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Boulez, may begin with a tapestry of sound like an orchestra tuning up (as my colleague has also complained, though orchestral tuning surely has its latent excitement). The work's central tutti also features one of Ligeti's great up-rushes of high frequencies – like a jet take-off – and ends with another of his up-dated flight-of-the-bumblebee *Moto perpetuos*. Yet the piling up of textures is by far the most massive he has yet attempted and, unlike the gentleness of *Melodien*, the lines have a jagged, almost tragic intensity, as though the expressionist tradition had burst forth anew.

Ligeti, however, speaks of it as a culmination of his polyphonic phase – so what now? One of his more entertaining achievements is a bizarre little pair of music theatre pieces for voices and instruments, *Aventures* and *Nouvelle Aventures* which he created out of a 'vocabulary' of abstract phonemes and meaningless gestures soon after *Atmosphères*. Swedish Opera's more recent commission of a full-length comedy based upon the *Ballade du Grand Macabre* by the Flemish writer Michel de Ghelderode – in which Death turns lover and bungles the Last Judgment – could well prove the ideal vehicle for this vein. Admittedly, composing a work perhaps three times longer than any he has produced to date is likely to raise its musical problems. Yet when I cornered Ligeti at a publisher's reception a year ago, he was explaining volubly that the narrative surface of an opera is only an excuse to engage in the really exciting underlying process of creating and releasing tension over the largest time scale. If he can contrive to re-jig the elements of musical theatre with the same ingenuity he has displayed in the concert hall, both composers and audiences will owe him some gratitude.

Television

Dennis Potter

Slippery Slopes

The title alone is enough to provoke the easy brutalities of the lowest form of wit, so I am not too reluctant to plant both my feet rather heavily upon *Terra Firma* before it has had a chance to get off the ground. First editions are notorious for being the worst editions, but this old adage hardly constitutes sufficient licence for BBC-2's weekly television magazine to have gone quite so far out of its way on Sunday night in maximising the stiff-limbed and glazed-eye embarrassment of its three unfortunate presenters. 'My name is Alasdair Clayre', 'my name is Nemone Lethbridge', and, either more arrogant or more economical, 'my name is Sherrin'. Viewers who did not immediately hide behind their armchairs would have recognised the style as one that has been plagiarised from the first page of a textbook of simple English for infant foreigners. The endearingly shifty look which accompanied these somehow less than emphatic claims to personal identity could also have served as a subtle introduction to a few of the more menacing conventions of our adult social life. The idea, I suppose, was to create a mood of informality, an error worse compounded when one of the stranded trio had the temerity to ask 'what will we start with?', rather like any singer interviewed on any chat show who just happens to have rehearsed the song the orchestra absolutely spontaneously starts to play.

In the event, if that is the right term, they started with Nemone Lethbridge in a plastic mac announcing across the flank of a bull that here she was at the Milk Marketing Board's artificial insemination centre. And why not? No reason, except for the sniggery little love song they piped in while a poor beast was made to rut on a mechanical cow. You may well have located the format by now: a television magazine of the late Fifties, mixing antique direct-to-camera summaries with elaborate verbal links that bump jerkily from one forgettable item to another. 'Well, I turn rather rapidly from bulls, as I usually do, to –'. The would-be witty cross-chat between the shafts of the troika is obviously going to be a feature of the programme, so do please be warned. It was in almost every way the sort of show which made people kick in their nine-inch sets 20 years ago. Terra infirma in fact.

And so we still need a good hold-all magazine programme on television at the end of the long dark evenings. *Tonight* has

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a floating time slot, a makeshift content and a low budget, all of which conspire to give it the air of an apologetic afterthought at the fag-end of the schedule. Monday's edition, for instance, was slung out altogether to give yet more room to the Winter Olympics, and it is this kind of freeze which has gradually anaesthetised the programme's nerve. Few of the items are allowed to run their natural length, being either too long – as with Lord Home of the Hirsel on how he finds retirement, which is (gosh) that 'one has more of one's time to oneself' – or irritatingly incomplete. On Friday Alger Hiss scarcely had time to get a match out of the box he clutched in a shaking hand, so his pipe and his answers remained unlit.

That's Life (BBC-1), by contrast, is so tightly scripted that it betrays no sign of doubt about its style or its audience. The eye-popping presenters talk as though they are on a trampoline made out of bedsprings from a honeymoon hotel, bouncing harmless innuendoes off whatever limb provokes the most chortles. Those who imagine we are being corrupted by polluted torrents of pornography should tune into this weird little programme to see with what serene innocence their fellow citizens enjoy the most humdrum salacity. In Britain, at least, it is perfectly possible to imagine Linda Lovelace being hired to advertise a throat sweet. The biggest laugh on Sunday came from a notice garnered from a unlikely hotel: 'Why not try our sauna baths? If you are lucky you might get a hot sausage.' Cue Esther Rantzen coyly putting a hand to her mouth to suppress the giggles, a signal to the studio audience to fall about in the best of British hoots. The same reassuring sound, incidentally, greets Mike Yarwood when he impersonates Malcolm Muggeridge, a sage who in turn gives us some idea of what St Paul would be like playing with a yoyo.

In the absence of Yarwood, I think *World in Action* (Granada) on Monday might have been marginally less bizarre if it had distributed soft rubber face masks to the five political journalists who played out the acrimonious contest in the cabinet over the Chrysler affair. There was nothing much in this argument which told us anything new, but the device certainly had its entertaining moments. Peter Jenkins made quite a shrewd Harold Lever and Adam Raphael a distinctly touching Eric Varley. Somewhere between impersonation and ventriloquism, the real star was not slow in coming forward. No, it was not David Watt as Prime Minister Harold Wilson, for all the masterly way he tapped his pencil and gently called upon his colleagues to stop bickering. I'm afraid the hero was none other than our old friend Walter Mitty. The programme was not so much an insight into the secret workings of the cabinet as a forlorn little trip into the hidden dreams of ageing lobby correspondents. Never mind, chaps.

At the moment, my own fantasies decline towards a more spectacular descent on the ski slopes, although the snow and ice of the Winter Olympics have not so far produced much cool television. 'They really have set this place alight,' gurgled Alan Weeks as a pair of Italians swirled around the rink, and David Coleman duly promised that the ice hockey match between the US and the USSR would considerably 'raise the temperature'. True enough, sufficient hot air was generated at the microphones to leave the commentators up to their necks in the usual slush.

Art

Robert Melville

Flatness is All

Max Ernst: Prints, Collages and Drawings 1919-72 *ICA*

The clattering prose of Tom Wolfe's demolition job on American art theory, *The Painted Word*, published in the current issue of *Harpers and Queen* (worth getting if you can stand the vacuous disdain on the faces of the fashion models), leaves the New York art scene looking like an Andy Warhol car crash. The critic Clem Greenberg was in the driver's seat when the bandwagon of Abstract Expressionism began to roll across the world. He had discovered a message in the paint work of Jackson Pollock and it was the secret of Pollock's greatness. No painter could ever again achieve greatness if he did not heed it. The message was relayed loud and clear: *flatness in painting is a moral obligation.* It made such a din in the studios that it was as if a klaxon had been given away with every art magazine. It was a lovely message for painters: eliminate foregrounds and backgrounds, just fling paint on to the picture plane. Thinking and imagining could be left to the art writers. Only one law to obey: keep it flat.

But the greatest moment was yet to come – comic, but deadly serious. Down in Washington the painter Morris Louis was thinking deep thoughts about flatness, and the terrible truth suddenly dawned on him that some of Pollock's paint marks were *thick*! All along he had been sinning against flatness, violating the integrity of the picture plane. No blame attached to Clem of course. It was not his fault if Pollock couldn't rise to Clem's vision of flatness undefiled. It may have been wrong of Louis to go ahead without getting clearance from the top, but a man has to do what he has to do. Wolfe describes the scene:

> So Louis used unprimed canvas and thinned out his paint until it *soaked right into* the canvas when he brushed it on. He could put a painting on the floor and lie on top of the canvas and cock his eye sideways like a robin and look along the surface of the canvas – and he had done it! Nothing existed above or below the picture plane, except for a few ultramicroscopic wisps of cotton fray, and what reasonable person could count that against him . . . No, everything now existed precisely *in* the picture plane and nowhere else. The paint was the picture plane and the picture plane was the paint.

Fortunately for Louis, Clem didn't take offence. In fact he admitted that from the very beginning, without saying, he had realised that there was something old-fashioned about Abstract Expressionism, and he began to write about colour field abstraction. After Louis, the moderns went into a flat spin trying to get even flatter, but he remains to this day the flattest of them all, and his soft colour stripes, muzzy at the edges, represent the morality of the artist at its highest. In one of his dips into pre-Clem art history, Wolfe points out that it was Peggy Guggenheim, with her strong Surrealist bias, who encouraged Pollock to make automatic brushstrokes.

The fine exhibition of Max Ernst's prints, collages and drawings at the ICA includes a complete set of photogravures of his 34 pencil rubbings published as *Histoire Naturelle* in 1926. They were done with the conscious desire to find a technique more thoroughly automatic than the doodled drawing and with the avowed intention of making André Breton's definition of Surrealism as 'pure psychic automatism' become as true for painting as for poetry. He was doing exactly the same thing for Breton's edict as Morris Louis did for Greenberg's concept of the necessity of flatness more than 30 years later. But Ernst was not concerned with texture for its own sake; he expected images and, with the subtlest of promptings, they came forth. Chiefly rubbings from grained wood, they fill the ICA with a kind of whispering, as if chance and choice are still plotting together the paintings of forests which emerged from the experiment. The forests are among the greatest achievements of Surrealist paintings, and they are so dark and deep and sinister that one wouldn't dare to venture inside even if it were possible. At the same time they preserve the integrity of the picture plane for the quite amoral reason that they are the flat phantoms of floorboards.

Weekend Competition

No 2399 **Set by Spiro Keats**

Along the lines of the 'Where Are They Now?' nostalgia-gimmicks, competitors are asked to describe – in verse or prose or, probably easiest, dramatic monologue – how any Shakespearean character is getting on here in 1976. Little Keith says this comp. has been used before, but never mind him. About 120 words or 12 lines by 27 February.

Result of No 2396 **Set by Nom de Pseud**

Competitors were asked to evoke one of the verse epics in the form of a single haiku.

Report **by Little Keith**

The haiku, I'll have some of you know, consists of three lines of five, seven and five syllables respectively, not merely of 17 assorted syllables. That said, I'm able to report that this was a fine entry, with lots of wit on show and even the odd bit of plangency. As for Mr Pauker's astonishing limeraiku (it summarises a tale from the

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Japanese Decalogue, *Yashmikura*, which Wilde is said to have used for the plot of *Lady Windermere's Fan*), why, I was tempted to award it the New Year cash bonanza – until my doubts about its provenance became intolerable. I'm therefore distributing the money across the board, with a handsome £3 to every haiku printed.

There's a vile old man
Of Japan, who roars at whores:
'Where's your fucking fan?'
TED PAUKER

Up – sweetness and light;
Middle – a vague sort of blight;
Down – frying tonight.

Bags of bull and gore;
Bitchy brasshats' endless jaw –
Just for a bint – cor!
TERRY TOWLING

Don't touch that fruit, Eve.
O my God – she's disobeyed!
Cosmic disaster!

Home on demob leave
Ulysses cried, 'Hi! Penny!
Long time no Circe!'
STANLEY J. SHARPLES

Disobedience;
Thus hell-bent ambitions find
Pandemonium.
RUSSELL LUCAS

With Troy falls the myth –
You *can* get sh! . . . you-know-what
From a wooden horse!
P. W. R. FOOT

Years he bored 'em numb:
'Yes, I disarmed Grendel . . . *and*
Topped his awful mum!'
ERIC SWAINSON

Slights, spites, fights, dire nights,
Lead to last rites for Hector,
Tamer of horses.
P. T. ROSS

Beginning with Scyld,
Beowulf goes on and on
Until he gets killed.
JOYCE JOHNSON

To tell of Dido,
Aeneas, Troy's sacking, would
Make a Trojan hoarse.
JOHN LOCKE

He did do Dido
Who kept the home fires burning
After he had flown.
M. K. CHEESEMAN

Grendelgrasper, great
meremonsters' master: old man
wasted by wormflame.
PETER SCHROEDER

A long journey home
Past whirlpools, strange women and
Some things that were both.
F. J. COOPER

Twenty-four books of
Dactylic hexameters;
Trojan War nears end.
W. F. N. WATSON

Assiac

Chess Board

No 1369 Having It His Own Way

When picking 4-pointers for the Hastings pieces I came up with some vintage Uhlmann and Taimanov, easy enough to find among the many old feathers in a grandmasterly cap: and that, of course, goes for Bronstein too, even more so perhaps (and we'll have some evidence of it at the end of this piece). In my Hastings researches I happened to come across a game position quite unsuitable for a 4-pointer because it leads to a fairly long and uncommonly subtle ending. It happened in the 1963 tournament, Bronstein Black against Brzozka, and this was the adjourned position after 40 moves. /1r6/5k2/1r1p1ktp1/2p2p1p/2P1pP1P / pPK1P1P1 / P2RB3 / 1R6 /. With Black's only breakthrough chance of . . . d5 not seeming practicable for the time being it looked as if the Hungarian master, after five initial defeats, was about to score his first ½ point against the great Bronstein of all people. On resumption, after **41) Rbd1,Ke7** White conceived the idea of 'sealing off' d5 even at the cost of the exchange and played **42) Rd5!?**. But Bronstein didn't take the exchange, not yet anyway; he was going to have it very much his own way and would come up with some very fruity ideas of his own.

42) . . . Kte8!; 43) R(1)d2,Ktc7; 44) Bd1,Kta6; 45) Bc2,Ktb4; 46) Bb1,Ra6! A subtle move preparing for the *tour-de-force* already germinating within David's bald dome; **47) Rd1,Ktd5:†!** Now it suits the grandmaster to take the proffered exchange; but there will be no sealing off; on the contrary, there'll be breaking and entering galore; **48) Rd5:** Forced to admit that the good old 'sealing-off' scheme won't wash. Obviously 48) cd: being ruled out by . . . Rab6, followed by . . . Rb4 and . . . c4, **Rb3:†!!** *Tableau!* **49) Kb3:** Relatively best since 49) ab:,a2; 50) Ba2:,Ra2:; would give Black an even faster chance of playing havoc among the White pawns, **Rb6†; 50) Kc2** Relatively best, **Rb2†; 51) Kc1,Re2** The Rook beginning his rapacious career well worth the sacrifice of a piece; **52) Rd1,Re3:; 53) Rg1,Rc3†; 54) Kd2,Rc4:; 55) Bc2,d5** Inexorably onwards; **56) Rb1,d4; 57) Bd1,Rc3; 58) Rb3,e3†; 59) Ke2,Rc1; 60) Ra3:,c4; 61) Ra7†,Kd6; 62) Ba4,Rh1; 63) Rd7†,Kc5; 64) Rc7†,Kb4; 65) a3†,Kc3!; 66) Bb5,Rh2†; 67) Kf1,d3; 68) Rc4:†,Kd2;** and White resigned.

The 4-pointer is a 1946 Bronstein *bon-bon* (Black against Pachman). On move 20 only two pawns are off the board, but David sees the ouverture of what will bring a quick decision. 20) . . . Ra1:!; 21) Ra1:,Bd4:; 22) Rd4:,Ktb3:; 23) Rd6:, the idea being to counter . . . .Kta1: by 24) Ktd5 and 25) Ktf6†. How, on his 23rd move, did Bronstein thwart all this by one 'hammer-blow' which led to White's speedy resignation? For 6 ladder-points **B** is a win and quite a beauty resolved in a mere four moves. **C** (for 7) is a win too leading either to mate or a Q-catch on move 7. Usual prizes, entries by 23 February.

A: Pachman-Bronstein 1946: /r1b1rktk1/1p3pb1/1qpp2p1/2kt5/2PKtP2p/1PKt3PP/3R1PBK/BR1Q4/.

B: G. Kasparyan: /2q5/5PktK/3P1k2/4R3/5B2/24/.

C: E. J. Tchélebi 1963: /7q/Q6Kt/16/Kt5kt1/6b1/8/k4K2/.

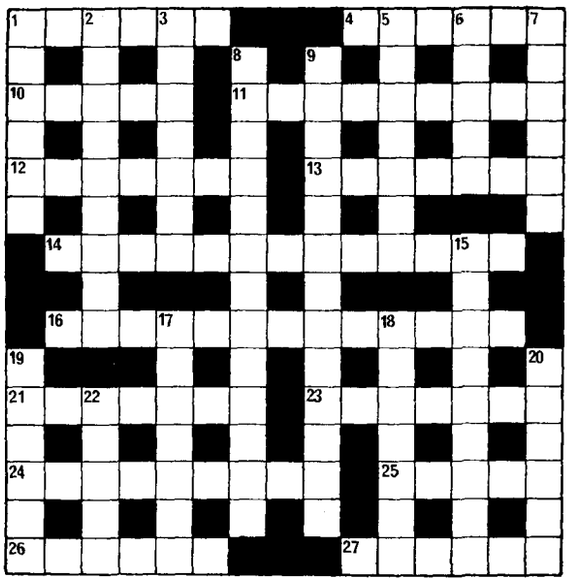
Report on No 1366

A: 1) . . . Re1†; 2) Kh2,Rh1††! & †††to follow.
B: 1) Rh3!,Rh3: (Otherwise Ktg3††); **2) f3!,Rf3:** (same reason); **3) Br3!!**, the Novotny killer, hampering either R or B in guarding agaainst ††.
C: 1) Kte3†,Ke2; 2) Bh2:!,Ke3:; 3) Kh8, Bd5; 4) g8=Q,Bb8:; 5) Bg1!, fg: and if it's a Q or R White is stalemated.

Many solvers spotted misprint of Rg2 in lieu of Kt) in **B**, but it would seem to be fair not to rate it. Prizes: C. Allen, R. C. Butler, R. C. Chaturvedi, H. Garfath, C. J. McSheehy.

Weekend Crossword 1151

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1151, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 24 Feb.



ACROSS

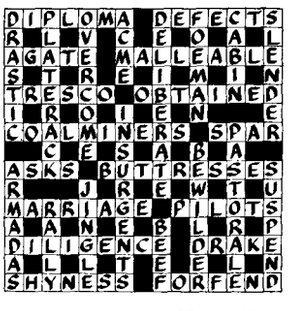
1. Perform in evening dress in a warehouse (6).
4. Country which sounds fat (6).
10. Means of catching a girl with a ring (5).
11. Overwhelmed when I and a good woman made an assignation (9).
12. If he had twice the heart he would be wealthy and ruthless (7).
13. Climbing equipment enables one to make a survey round the slope (7).
14. Home could make me cry out if the North were lost (6, 7).
16. Outdoor seat makes early growth stop (8, 5).
21. Passes to and fro when the prohibition ends (7).
23. Point fewer for those without purpose (7).
24. Small body with many members (9).
25. Take part in a race on even terms (5).
26. Pigment used an indefinite number of times in an Italian city (6).
27. The bird returns thus with what it does (6).

DOWN

1. Wind round gold in abundance (6).
2. Child shot to pieces in the scullery (9).
3. Try to win with spirit and what is left of one's fire (7).
5. The bloody battle up north is newly illustrated (7).
6. Prevent poets being translated (5).
7. 'From this day to the —— of the world' (*K. Henry V*) (6).
8. Town in which a pretender takes precedence over the church (13).
9. Foes punch and grab wildly for food (5, 2, 6).
15. Her escort has become Jane's husband (9).
17. Without the bulb the view would be good (7).
18. Moderates fits of rage (7).
19. Means of counting a hundred inside a vehicle (6).
20. Missing coin found on a salver (6).
22. Moment when a duck includes a century (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1149



Prizewinners to No 1149

W. G. Wright (Stroud)
Ken Russell (Aylesbury)
A. W. Stone (Dublin)

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APPOINTMENTS

SECRETARY/PA AND EFFICIENT SHORTHAND TYPIST
required
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requires a **Deputy Director** (on scale SO2 £4,689-£4,992). The Deputy will assist the Director in formulating and carrying out the Association's policy and in particular will co-ordinate the activities of the other Specialist Officers. Previous experience in Arts administration is essential.
Full details and application form from: **The Director**
Merseyside Arts Association
Bluecoat Chambers
LIVERPOOL L1 3BX
or phone 051-709 0671
Closing date for applications: 27 February.

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Publications

THIS ECONOMIC CRISIS condemns the Left and vindicates Socialism. To verify, read the Socialist Standard February issue. 17p (incl. p.&p.) Depts NS, The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Board and Executive of

THE ARAB-BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Wish to express their deep gratification for the support and encouragement received from the British business community at large during the early stages of the Chamber's establishment.

The Chamber is now in the course of moving from its provisional offices at 72 New Bond Street to its newly acquired premises at:

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As from the second week in February 1976, the Chamber will proceed speedily toward putting into effect its plans to gradually phase its Departments into operation.

For inquiries and further information please write to the Chamber's Secretary-General, at the above address.

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RESEARCHER into female sexuality invites contributions/communications from NS readers aged 30 plus. Complete anonymity guaranteed, sincerity essential. Box 3067.

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GRADUATE, divorcée, non-orth. Jewish, 45, slim, lively, feminine; interests inc. theatre, cinema, music, conversation, seeks permanent, caring relationship with unattached professional man. Box 2939.

AFFECTIONATE, lively woman, 43, intelligent but not intellectual, wishes to meet life-loving man, Christian preferred. London or South. Box 2716.

BUSINESSMAN visiting London from time to time. Full of 'joie-de-vivre' but not intellectual, would like to meet sympathetic lady 35-45, with similar outlook and complementary interests. Box 2969.

WRITER, middle fifties but well preserved, intelligent, travelled, interested in most subjects, would like to meet attractive, intelligent woman 35 to 45, who like him lacks fulfilment; with view friendship not marriage. Oxon/Bucks preferred. Box 3013.

LONDON, PROF. woman, much travelled, varied interests, would like to meet intelligent, intellectual gentleman 50s. Box 2971

MALE MUSICIAN, 45, seeks female for friendship. Varied interests. Box 3042.

AUTHORESS, cultured, attractive, divorcing, seeks brainy (comely?) male friend, 47+. Box 3043.

TEACHER, WIDOW, slim young 49, house near St Albans, car, seeks male companion, theatre, music, walking. Box 3044.

VIVACIOUS BRUNETTE, sculptor, attractive, slim, well groomed, resident Central London, wishes to meet interesting, successful, unattached man in mid forties wishing meaningful friendship. Box 3048.

WOMAN sks comp'n, m., 40+, share conversation, outings, expenses. Oxon Box 3049

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol. 91 No. 2343

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Exhibitions

GANYMED GALLERY, 11 Gt Turnstile, WC1. 405 9836. Original lithographs by L. S. Lowry and satirical prints 1780-1820 by Gillray, Heath, Cruikshank. £6-£100.

Theatres

TSAFENDAS 'Was the Gap in Veowoerd's Logic?'. Almost Free Theatre opens 16 Feb. 1.15 p.m. 485 6224.

CITIZENS' THEATRE, GLASGOW. Citizens' Theatre Co. in 'Mirandolina' 14 Feb. 'The Changeling' 16/21 Feb. 041 429 0022.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE. 722 9301. 'You'll Never be Michelangelo', a new comedy by Roger Milne. Prevs 19-22 Feb. 8 p.m. Opens 23 Feb. 7 p.m. Subs. eves 8 p.m.

OLD VIC. The National Theatre. 928 7616. Tonight 7, tomorrow 2, 'Hamlet'. Uncut text runs 4 hrs, note early start. Tomorrow 8, 'Happy Days'. Prevs Wed. & Thurs. 7.30, 'Watch it Come Down'.

ROYAL COURT. 730 1745. Eves 8, Sats 5 & 8.30. James Bolam, Jane Asher & Stephen Moore in Christopher Hampton's play 'Treats'. 'Sensational . . .' S.T. 'Very funny . . .' Obs.

SUGAWN THEATRE. Duke of Wellington, 119 Balls Pond Road, N1. A celebration of James Joyce's 'Finnegan's Wake'. Devised and directed by John Quinn. 9/12 & 16/19 February. Curtain up 8 p.m. Tel. 254 1458. Admission 50p.

THEATRE ROYAL, WINDSOR. 95 61107. 'The Grass is Greener' by Hugh & Margaret Williams.

VANBRUGH THEATRE CLUB. To 14 Feb. Harold Pinter's 'The Collection' & 'The Lover'. From 18 Feb. Wedekind's 'Spring Awakening'. Details: RADA, 62 Gower Street, London WC1. 636 7076.

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Concert

CLEVELAND QUARTET plays at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on Tues. 17 Feb. at 7.45 p.m. Haydn String Quartet in F, Op. 3, No. 5; Beethoven String Quartet in F Minor, Op. 95; Schubert String Quartet D810 'Death and the Maiden'. Tickets £1.50, £1.25, £1.05, 85p, 65p from Royal Festival Hall Box Office, SE1X 8XX (Tel. 01-928 3191).

Entertainments

NATIONAL POETRY CENTRE, 21 Earls Court Sq., London SW5. Tonight 13 Feb. 7.30 p.m. 'Poets in Person' Bernard Saint and Duncan Glen. 20 Feb. 7.30 p.m. Small Presses Festival: James Simmons.

POETRY at National Book League, 7 Albemarle Street, W1. 13 February at 6.30 p.m. Admission free. Alan Brownjohn and Laurence Lerner read their own poetry.

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Meetings

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: A lecture entitled: 'The Theory of Social Justice in Plato's Republic' will be given by Professor G.Vlastos (USA) on 16 February 1976 at the Senate House (Chancellor's Hall), Malet Street, London WC1 at 5 p.m. Admission free, without ticket. Academic Registrar.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. Admission free. 17 Feb. 'The Declaration of Independence, 1776' by Professor M.A. Jones; 19 Feb. 'Why Capitalism is Irrational' by Mr G.A. Cohen.

PHILIP JENKINSON presents 'The Evolution of the Musical', 2.30-6.30 p.m. Saturday, 21 February. Tickets 60p (students & OAPs 30p), and details (s.a.e. please) from SASS, Goldsmiths' College, New Cross SE14 6NW or at door.

PROFESSOR SIR HERMANN BONDI FRS, speaks on 'Defence & the Citizen: the position of the Scientist'. The 5th Leverhulme Colloquium, 6 p.m. Thurs. 12 February at the Royal Institution, 21 Albermarle St, London W1. Details from the Council for Science and Society, 3/4 St Andrew's Hill, London EC4.

'A GOOD AND USEFUL LIFE', a film by Tony Parker about prison, followed by discussion. Thursday 19 February 7 p.m. at NISW, 5-7 Tavistock Place, London W1. Howard League. Non-members 25p.

JACQUES LE GOFF, Président de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, will give a lecture, 'Faut-il promouvoir une ethno-histoire européenne?' on Monday 16 Feb. at 6.15 p.m. at the French Institute, Queensberry Place, SW7. Admission free.

THEODOR HERZL Society & London Univ. (EMD), 57 Eton Ave, NW3. Tues. 17 Feb. 8.15 p.m. History of The Holy Land. Dr Erwin Jacobs: 'Pharises & Rabbis – The Development of Jewish Tradition'.

'THE SHAPE OF BRITAIN'S BLACK Community': A talk by the Rev. Wilfred Wood, 7.30 p.m. Thurs. 19 Feb. at West Indian Students Centre, 1 Collingham Gdns, SW5.

THURS. 26 Feb. 7.30 p.m. British premiere of new Soviet film 'The Bonus' (Eng. subtitles). Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High St, London W8. Tickets £1.07 inc. post. From: Society for Cultural Relations with USSR, 320 Brixton Rd, London SW9 6AB.

SOCIALIST THEORY. Two meetings at 52 Clapham High St, SW4. (5 mins Clapham North Tube). Sat. 14 Feb. 'Introduction to Marxian Economics'. Sat. 21 Feb. 'Historical Materialism – the M.C.H.' Commence 7.30. Questions, discussion. The Socialist Party of Great Britain.

HANSFORD-MILLER, ENP, with SNP Chairmen, Dixon Halls, Glasgow, 20 Feb. 7.30; Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, 21 Feb. 7.30.

'LESSONS OF JEFFERSONIAN Democracy': W.H. Liddell. Sun. 15 Feb. 11 a.m. Tuesday Discussion on theme 'Justice, Law and Freedom' Tues. 17 Feb. 7 p.m. 'The Relevance of Olaf Stapleton': Richard Kirby. South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Sq., WC1. 01-242 8032/3.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Sat. 14 Feb. 3 p.m. 'Open Day'. Tues. 17 Feb. 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 18 Feb. 6.30 p.m. – Public Lecture 'Why Buddhism' – Christmas Humphreys. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

THEOSOPHY. Public Talk & Questions. Sun. 15 Feb. 8 p.m. Free. 'Ghosts and Astral Bodies'. S.a.e. for programme, book list & literature. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

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